

Tuesday
December 15 1998
Britain's newspaper
for Europe

The Guardian

G2 with European weather

Women, G2 pages 8-9

Education, G2 pages 12-13

Palestinians hail US president

Clinton gets his historic show of hands

Julian Borger in Gaza

HOURS before Bill Clinton became the first United States president to set foot on Palestinian-controlled land yesterday, he was already seen on every corner of the Gaza Strip standing alongside a joyful Yasser Arafat, under the words "We have a dream - Free Palestine".

The double portrait was everywhere, bedecked with US and Palestinian flags, on placards held aloft by schoolchildren, and on a five storey-high mural. In truth the image was a computer-generated fake which had borrowed a picture of Mr Clinton giving a thumbs up from an old election campaign. But such details mattered little to the waiting crowds.

The president's arrival on this silver of Mediterranean coastline was a spark that would one day bring a Palestinian state to life, and they loved him for it.

When the crucial moment came for the Palestinian National Council to affirm its renunciation of violence against Israel - the main diplomatic prize Mr Clinton had come for - even hardened veterans of the long guerrilla war vied with each other to raise their hands highest.

Mr Clinton seized the moment. The council, he said, had turned to page 3, column 1.

Historic day, page 7



Yasser Arafat thanks Bill Clinton at yesterday's Palestinian National Council meeting in Gaza. PHOTOGRAPH: GARY HERSHORN

10m face criminal vetting

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

EVERY job applicant in Britain will be expected to provide proof of a "clean" criminal record under measures to curb child abuse announced by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, last night.

Employers will have the right to insist job applicants and volunteers produce a certificate detailing any criminal past from a Criminal Records Bureau which will be set up within two years.

This massive extension of official vetting will involve more than a third of the workforce every year. The Home Office expects 10 million certificates to be issued each year, with applicants charged between £5 and £10.

The new self-financing agency, based on Merseyside and providing 1,200 jobs, will be managed by the UK Passport Agency.

The scheme will involve three levels of checks on a person's criminal past, ranging from listing all "unsent" convictions to enhanced checks for those working with children which disclose unproven police intelligence about current operations.

Fears were raised last night that employers would "play safe" and refuse jobs to anyone with a criminal record, regardless of codes of practice stating that only convictions "relevant" to the job should be taken into account.

About 5 million people in Britain have a criminal record and there were concerns last night that many could face permanent exclusion from the labour market.

Voluntary organisations, such as the Scouts and the National Centre for Volunteering, were angry that the Government had decided their unpaid volunteers would face a charge of up to £10 for each certificate. The Scouts Association said the decision would cost it £750,000 a year.

The scheme to vet all job applicants in Britain formed part of Michael Howard's 1997 Police Act which reached the statute book just before the general election. Labour had made few statements on its position on the new Criminal Records Bureau until Mr Straw announced his plans last night to implement Mr Howard's legislation.

Mr Blair said: "Britain's interests were safeguarded and promoted without difficulty. We defended our position, in a constructive way, just as others defended theirs."

He claimed the Government had "transformed" Britain's relations with other EU states building alliances to promote economic reform.

"Those who would end up by taking us out of Europe, or so far to its margins as to eclipse any serious influence in Europe, would profoundly damage this country," Mr Hague said Mr Blair's "habit of saying one thing to an audience in one place and another in another place is catching up with him".

Sketch, page 2; Trading ban, page 4; The inflating euro, page 11

Criminal certificates:

• **Baseline** for all job applicants. Will show all convictions which are not "spent" under the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Expected to be issued to six million people a year.

• **Intermediate** for those with regular contact with children, the elderly or the sick and in specified professions such as health, pharmacy and the armed services. Will include police cautions and "spent" as well as "unsent" convictions. Expected to be issued to two million people each year.

• **Enhanced** for jobs involving significant access to children. Will include background checks, unproven information such as police cautions, and police intelligence on current operations. Two million each year.

The scale of the scheme is because the Data Protection Act says only the individual concerned can give permission for his personal details to be passed to a third party. This bars private companies and voluntary organisations from having direct access to police records.

The Home Office minister, Paul Boateng, said the Criminal Records Bureau would be an important step towards stopping dangerous people working with young people.

"We do not believe this will lead to any abuses on the part of those seeking the assurances that the sign of the certificate will give. There will be safeguards to protect civil liberties and the rights of ex-offenders under the Rehabili-

tation of Offenders Act will be maintained."

He defended the charge for volunteers by saying £10 was the price of a child's ticket to a football match and would not deter those determined to work with children or undertake other voluntary work.

The National Centre for Volunteering did not believe unpaid volunteers should be out of pocket. "This is a big disappointment," said Tony Vickers, of the centre. "It is next to nothing if you are in paid work but many volunteers are not."

The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders urged the Government to reconsider. It welcomed greater access to the criminal records of those working with children or vulnerable adults but was concerned about giving employers sweeping powers to demand information about past offences.

"There is a real risk that many employers will decide to play safe and refuse to employ anyone with a criminal record. If ex-offenders find it significantly harder to find jobs, this will increase the likelihood of reoffending and damage the fight against crime," said Helen Edwards, Nacro's chief executive.

John Wadham, the director of Liberty, warned that since one in three men had a conviction for a non-motoring offence there was a danger that many would suffer from unjustified discrimination.

But the Association of Chief Police Officers said the scheme would give improved access to criminal records to help employers assess the suitability of job applicants.

Tabloid campaign on EU taxes strengthens hostility to euro

Mark Atkinson
and Michael White

TONY Blair's difficulties in winning the public over to the euro were starkly illustrated last night with the release of an opinion poll showing the storm over tax harmonisation intensifying hostility to Britain joining the single currency.

A survey conducted after the tabloid newspaper campaign against standardising taxes across the European Union found opposition to monetary union hardening, reversing the trend of the past year.

Conducted between December 8 and 9, the week after the debate flared, the poll shows 58 per cent against Britain becoming part of the euro-zone and 28 per cent in favour, increasing the majority wanting to retain sterling to 24 per cent from 19 per cent in September.

This reverses the previous pro-EMU swing prompted by the Government's expressions of support for the euro and the principle of joining when economic conditions are right.

The poll, of 1,568 people, underlines the struggle the Government faces with anti-EMU sections of the media when it decides to stage a promised referendum on the subject. It suggests the Government will fulfil its ambition to join the euro-zone only

if it convinces voters that giving up the pound would not mean higher taxes.

The biggest swing of anti-EMU feeling has been among readers of tabloid newspapers, according to the poll, which is carried out every two months by MORI for the US investment bank Salomon Smith Barney.

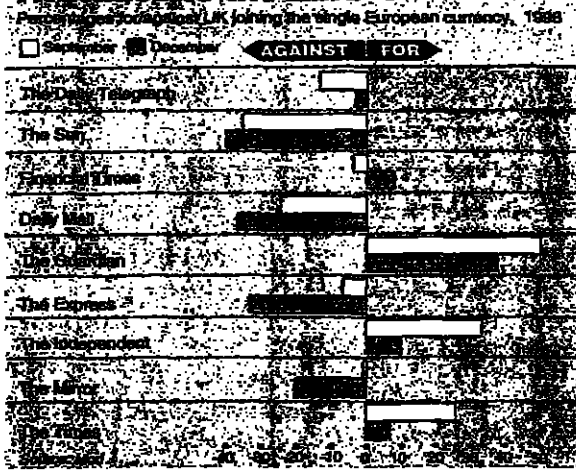
While EMU opponents have always outnumbered supporters among tabloid readers, their ranks have swelled in the past three months from a majority of 30 per cent to 37 per cent as a result of the rash of stories portraying Germany's finance minister Oskar Lafontaine as the new Brussels bossman.

Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Smith Barney, said the Sun's readership was already highly anti-EMU and its views had not been changed by the episode, which the Prime Minister has tried to bury by issuing a joint UK-German tax statement.

However, anti-EMU sentiment among Daily Mail and Express readers was now of similar proportions. "Even the readers of the Labour-supporting Mirror show a sharp anti-EMU swing," Mr Saunders said.

The Guardian readership is by far the most strongly in favour of Britain joining the single currency, supported by

Anger over the EMU



a majority of almost 40 per cent. However, the tax harmonisation row has reduced this support by around 15 points over the past three months. Support among Independent readers has slumped from a majority of just over 30 per cent in September to 10 per cent today.

Leaving the anti-EMU Telegraph aside, broadsheet readers remain broadly in favour of British membership of the euro-zone but they have had their enthusiasm dimmed by the tax harmonisation scare. From a majority of 11 per cent in favour in September, there is now a pro-EMU margin of 6 per cent.

Even if the Government were to urge people to vote for British membership of the euro-zone, the majority against would be 14 per cent, the poll shows, up from 7 per cent in July and September.

The poll was welcomed by Nick Herbert, the new chief executive of Business for Sterling, the organisation set up to campaign against British membership of the euro-zone.

He said the poll confirmed the depth of concern among the public about the implications of Britain joining the euro-zone.

In the Commons yesterday

William Hague raised the tempo following the EU's weekend summit in Vienna, where key decisions were postponed until next spring.

He accused Tony Blair of failing to defend the national interest - as Britain faces the greatest threat to its independence for decades. The Conservative leader's claim, before the Prime Minister was cross-examined by MPs on the summit, would profoundly damage this country," Mr Hague said Mr Blair's "habit of saying one thing to an audience in one place and another in another place is catching up with him".

Mr Blair said: "Britain's interests were safeguarded and promoted without difficulty. We defended our position, in a constructive way, just as others defended theirs."

He claimed the Government had "transformed" Britain's relations with other EU states building alliances to promote economic reform.

"Those who would end up by taking us out of Europe, or so far to its margins as to eclipse any serious influence in Europe, would profoundly damage this country," Mr Hague said Mr Blair's "habit of saying one thing to an audience in one place and another in another place is catching up with him".

Sketch, page 2; Trading ban, page 4; The inflating euro, page 11

Algeria D 6.50	Egypt E 6.50	Kuwait D 6.50	Qatar Q 6.50
Algeria US\$ 2	Kuwait US\$ 2	Lebanon L 3.000	Romania LE 32,500
Andorra FF 10	Lebanon US\$ 2.75	Luxembourg LF 65	Saudi Arabia R 10
Armenia A 5.00	Moldova E 30	Malta M 0.50	Slovakia SK 65
Bahrain B 0.65	Moldova US\$ 2.75	Malta US\$ 0.50	Slovenia S 270
Bulgaria B 70	Monaco M 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	Spain P 275
Bulgaria LV 500	Monaco US\$ 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	Sweden SK 7
Canada C 5.05	Monaco US\$ 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	Switzerland SF 3.50
Croatia CN 15.00	Monaco US\$ 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	Thailand B 90
Czechia CZ 100	Monaco US\$ 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	Turkey TL 70,000
Czechia KC 25	Monaco US\$ 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	Ukraine US\$ 3.50
Denmark DK 17	Monaco US\$ 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	USA US\$ 3.00
Dubai D 5.50	Monaco US\$ 25	Malta US\$ 0.50	

UK news

The use of four antibiotics in animal feed has been banned throughout Europe to protect consumer health. Page 4

International

Two South Koreans listed as killed in action in the Korean war have escaped from the communist North after 45 years in captivity. Page 6

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In the G2 EUROPE health pages today: could this charming little flower really cheer you up?

+ Ann Robinson recommends a variety of cures for the seasonal hangover + Matthew Norman's diary of a hypochondriac

Sketch

Got a problem? Well, don't bring it to Tonyland



Simon Hoggart

YESTERDAY we were taken on a guided tour of Tonyland, it was the Prime Minister's equivalent of his holiday slides.

In Tonyland there are no rows or disputes. Everybody seeks agreement, and, failing that, they take steps towards a consensus. Mostly in Tonyland people agree with Tony, but on the rare occasions they differ with him, they hold an ongoing debate on the topic (or "engage" with it, as people say in this happy land).

Tonyland resembles a political theme park. One imagines underpaid sweating students in gigantic fibre-glass models of Tony, patting children on the head and encouraging them to take photographs.

Unlike Disneyland, that other semi-mythical place where all the troubles of the world are kept outside, Tonyland is moveable. Last weekend it was situated in Vienna, where the EU was having one of its regular summit meetings.

It seems to have been a most agreeable occasion. Problems were addressed, "overall agreement" was reached, and progress was welcomed on many fronts.

As for our own country, why, Tonyland has attractions for us all. British interests, we learned, are "fully protected", having been "safeguarded and promoted without difficulty". Were there any arguments which tarnished the gleaming peace of the whole occasion? Heaven forbid! "We defended our positions, in a constructive way, just as others defended theirs."

It certainly sounds as if Mr Blair and his family of ministers will be going back to Tonyland, where they had a marvellous time and thought it was all terrific value for money.

But then along came William Hague, like a drunken boogaloo who's somehow got into the park and is frightening the children on the X's A Small World after All ride.

Young William does not live

In a world of perfect consensus. He believes in the darker forces of debate, argument, and plain old-fashioned offensiveness.

He accused the Prime Minister of saying one thing to the Europeans and another to the rest of us. Why had he told the British people that the UK rebate was not up for discussion, and the Austrian media something quite different?

Why was the economics minister of Luxembourg saying that nothing would stand in the way of tax harmonisation? "Where did he get that idea?" (There is always mileage for a Tory leader in attacking Luxembourgish functionaries. The idea of being ordered about by someone roughly as important as a medium-sized borough treasurer stirs in them an atavistic rage.)

Mr Hague concluded by announcing that the Prime Minister had been "running around the EU giving more false impressions than Rory Bremner", which I thought a little unfair, since Mr Bremner's version of William Hague is rather more convincing than the real thing.

Mr Blair looked pained at all this. People don't shout and make rude jokes in Tonyland. When he has abolished party politics in this country, and we all live in mutual consensus, nobody will need to. (You may recall that he announced the first stage in this ongoing programme last week when he declared that he hoped to destroy the Tory party.)

But, perhaps like Hubert Lane infuriated by some jibe at William Hague, he couldn't resist a mild spot of jeering. "Under the present leader of the Conservative Party, the lunatics have taken over the asylum. The policy of his party is provided by the headbangers who surround him."

I looked at the headbangers then around him. There was Peter Lilley, the Dr Niles Crane of the Tories, who famously goes clubbing every night until dawn. Sir George Young, who is alleged to sport six nose rings at the weekend, and Sir Patrick Cormack, whose 1997 nude dance in the mud is still spoken of at Glasbury with awe.

Mr Blair finished wearily. "If we carry on conducting the type of argument the way you want, we might as well leave the EU." We were back in Tonyland, where nobody ever argues, but they are happy all day long.

Review

Stumbling waltz in memory maze

Mic Moroney

The Way You Look Tonight
Druid Theatre, Galway

NALL Williams, author of the oddly moving and vividly intact novel, *Four Letters Of Love*, returns to a theme of familial love and loss in this new play, set in a remote rural Irish post office, where the last telephone switchboard has finally been replaced.

Much of the action takes place in the mind of the elderly Kate, the one-time switchboard operator, and wife of the retired postmaster. As such, she has been a kind of nerve centre for the village, and indeed her own family and children, two of whom have long emigrated.

Her three kids are walking, talking characters in Kate's imagination — a faculty left vividly intact by the disease to which she is finally succumbing: cerebellar ataxia, a progressive wastage of all motor neurons.

This is a fragmentary, meandering piece, which hinges on the slow, unfurling depiction of a loving, but textbook-dysfunctional family. The core of it is that Kate's caring, sweet-humoured husband has repeatedly two-timed her down the years, causing gossip of which she was only too aware.

It is at this point, almost belatedly, that all the theatrical "make believe" games come into focus. Kate's adult children con-

stantly relive their earliest roles, re-enacting their father's infidelities by aping the fantasy world of their parents.

The latter is summoned up by the soundtrack: the camp, schmaltzy ballroom music of the forties and fifties, with grainy video of Fred Astaire spectacles projected on to the actors as they shuffle through a few steps.

It's never entirely clear where Kate's imagination/memory ends and "real time" begins. Raging against her infirmity, Britta Smith's Kate is flimsy, powerful, yet strangely forgiving of her husband, Jim. As the latter, Patrick Waldren curves a curiously sympathetic figure from rather thin material, as he cheerfully endures the gruelling intimacies of incontinence and spoon-feeding.

These scenes don't quite convince you of the weight of years, but they are affecting nonetheless, teasing out the psychology of terminal illness, dependency, and guilty caring — not least in their last, spastic waltzes, as Jim heaves Kate in and out of her wheelchair.

Outside these moments and the brief dance routines, the piece remains often icily static.

Paddy Cusack's direction certainly lacks the ferocious tension of a lot of Druid's work.

But it's hard to know how you could imbue Williams's script, with its rambling progress, with any real dramatic structure or drive.

Chancellor seeks idealistically based global economy □ US speech will propose code of conduct

Brown to take high ground

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

THE Chancellor, Gordon Brown, will today call for the international community to repudiate the laissez-faire doctrine of the Thatcher-Reagan era when he unveils the Government's four-point plan for a new global economic constitution based on "high ideals".

Billed as Labour's Third Way for a global economy shaken by the series of crises of the past 18 months, Mr Brown's plan will call for codes of conduct for governments, curbs on the private sector and safeguards for the world's poor during International Monetary Fund pro-

grammes. The Chancellor will warn his audience at Harvard that the traumatic events of the past 18 months have exposed the weaknesses of a deregulated international system. He will urge that the left-of-centre governments that now dominate the leading industrial nations should speed up plans for reform.

"We can't simply declare whenever the stock market bounces back that the crisis is over and that we can return to the status quo," he will say. Britain is concerned that the recovery in share prices since central banks started to cut interest rates has started to erode the strong commitment to reform at the time of the Russian debt default and the near-collapse of the Long Term Capital Management

hedge fund in the summer. "The responsibility falls on a new generation to be present at the creation of new rules that break with the past and that both effectively and fairly meet the demands of the new global economy. Times and circumstances change but ideals endure."

The Chancellor will underline the need for urgent action tomorrow when he travels to Washington for meetings with Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, Michel Camdessus, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, and James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank.

In his speech today, the Chancellor will argue that the

architects of the post-war international economic system gave expression to a new public purpose based on high ideals.

"The 1990s saw a new consensus emerge based on a return to laissez-faire. This was focused not on what governments should do but on what governments should not do. Enlightened self-interest gave way to sheer self-interest."

"Instead of rising to the challenge of applying post-war ideals to a new world, and aiming for high levels of employment and prosperity for all, sights were lowered and the vision was narrowed. The global market had to be left entirely to market dogma, which left no place for the pursuit of high ideals." Mr

Brown will say that the aim for policy makers should be to capture the full benefits of global markets and capital flows while at the same time minimising the risks of disruption, maximising opportunities and protecting the most vulnerable. "In short, to return to the international economy to public purpose and high ideals."

The Government is calling for reforms in four specific areas — codes of conduct for governments on monetary, fiscal and social policy, the creation of a global financial regulator, a system of global crisis prevention that would prevent the private sector from exacerbating emergencies and social protection for the poor.

National governments should not pick and mix which standards they choose to meet and which standards they choose to ignore. It is for these reasons that proper implementation of the codes must be a condition for any IMF or World Bank support."

According to the Government, the private sector must forge partnerships with governments, in which information would be made available, but firms would have a responsibility not to leave when times got rough.

Mr Brown will stress that while international capital flows have created fresh challenges, "the guiding star remains the same — the promotion of global economic stability and international co-operation to promote growth and employment."

Man who killed at random found hanged in Broadmoor

Simon Cooper

ASCHIZOPHRENIC killer who was being detained for life for the random killing of a retired civil servant hanged himself yesterday.

Christopher Moffatt, 27, described as "a grave danger to the public" by the judge who committed him earlier this month, was found hanging by his shoelaces by staff at Broadmoor Hospital.

On April 9 this year, Moffatt walked into the Andover home of 64-year-old Anthony Harrison and attacked him with a kitchen knife as he had lunch with his wife, Jennifer. The attack caused fatal wounds to Mr Harrison and left his 61-year-old wife severely injured.

Moffatt, a former university student, who was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia in 1993, later told police: "I just went out looking for someone to kill."

At Winchester crown court, Moffatt admitted the manslaughter of Mr Harrison on the grounds of diminished responsibility and the attempted murder of his wife. Moffatt was committed to Broadmoor indefinitely on December 4 by Mr Justice Richards, who told him: "It is plain to see you pose a grave danger to the public."

He added: "One's heart goes out to the family, whose lives have been devastated in this way. It is no comfort to them to know you were suffering mental illness at the time and are still suffering it now."

Yesterday a Broadmoor spokesman said: "We can confirm a patient was found dead in his room. An inquest will be held to examine the exact circumstances."

Last night, mental health campaigners condemned the system which had left Moffatt free to kill.

Moffatt, who had twice pre-



Jennifer Harrison: suffered severe injuries in attack

viously attempted suicide, carried out the killing seven weeks after walking out of a psychiatric unit in November 1997.

Three months earlier he had been deemed so ill he needed detaining in a secure hospital. But it was felt his condition had improved enough for him to be transferred to a non-psychiatric unit — Parklands Hospital in Basingstoke, Hampshire. While there he repeatedly went missing.

Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of Sane, said: "Christopher's suicide is one of the most stark reminders of how our casual attitudes to serious mental illness can result in desperate suffering and unnecessary death."

"It is a scandal that Christopher was allowed to abscond eight times from the same hospital despite being found sufficiently deluded and disturbed to be detained under the Mental Health Act."

She added: "His family had pleaded for him to be kept under constant supervision, but they were ignored."

During Moffatt's attack, Mr Harrison suffered wounds to



Christopher Moffatt... trial heard that he told police 'I just went out looking for someone to kill'

Nude Nicole makes news

Michael Ellison in New York

BROADWAY reacted yesterday as if it had never seen a naked body before when The Blue Room, the most talked about theatrical event in years, opened.

Times Square, which has lost many of its strip clubs to Mayor Rudy Giuliani's war on smut, opened its arms to erotica in the legitimate theatre as the Hollywood star Nicole Kidman drove the Clinton impeachment story down the news agenda.

The first three pages of the Daily News were devoted to David Hare's updated version of *La Ronde*, leading with the headline: "Naked Nicole Takes Broadway".

The New York Post concentrated on the response of fashion designer, Ms Kidman's husband, with "Tom: Nicole is Diamond In The Buff", while the New York Times went for a more restrained "Fool's Gold In The Kingdom Of Desire" on the front of its fifth section.

The play, a transfer from the Donmar Warehouse in London, is running on Broad-



Nicole Kidman takes her opening night curtain call

way for only 111 performances and has already taken \$2.3 million at the box office.

Touts are asking \$390 (\$210) for what is routinely described as Broadway's hottest ever ticket. Thirty-one-year-

old Kidman and the rarely mentioned Iain Glen play the parts of all 10 characters, involved in five sexual encounters.

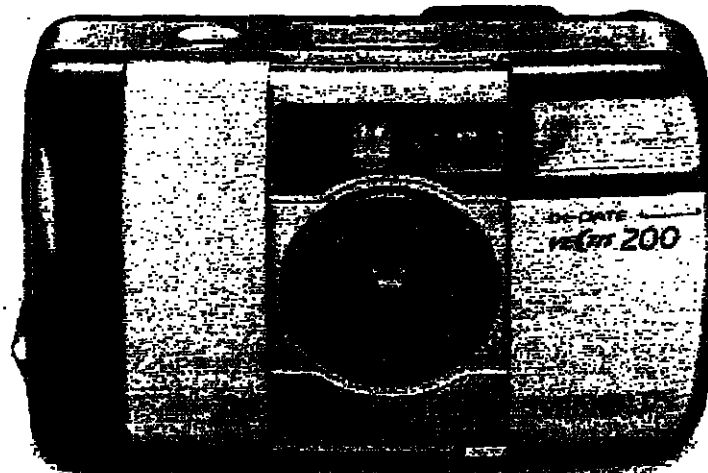
Apart from Cruise, opening night at the Cort Theatre was a photo-opportunity for movie directors Spike Lee and Joel Schumacher, chat show host Rosie O'Donnell, designer Diane von Furstenberg, and actress Teri Hatcher.

"Iain and Nicole kicked it tonight," said Cruise. "I've seen the play many times but I got so caught up in the characters that I forget that it's my wife up there."

Some of the New York critics took a line contrary to their London counterparts and focused on the more high-minded aspects of the production.

Fintan O'Toole in the Daily News said: "Though it may be the corniest chat-up line in the book, the real revelation is not Nicole Kidman's like and willowy body but her mind. What shines through most powerfully is her brilliant theatrical intelligence, the speed and subtlety with which she adapts and adapts five very different characters."

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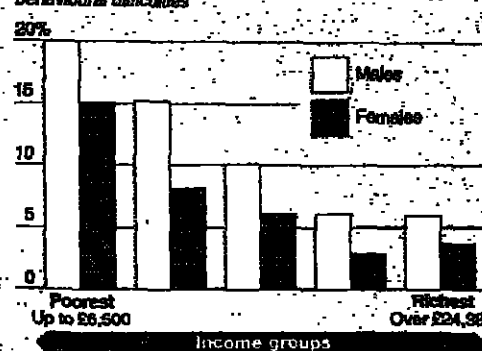
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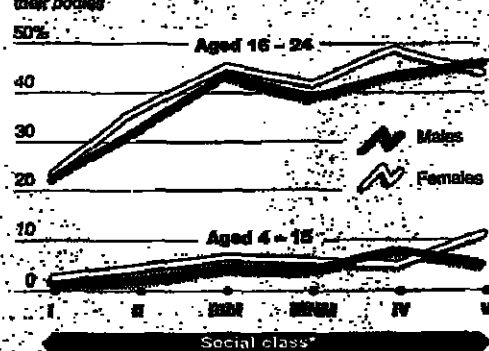
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Difficult children and income

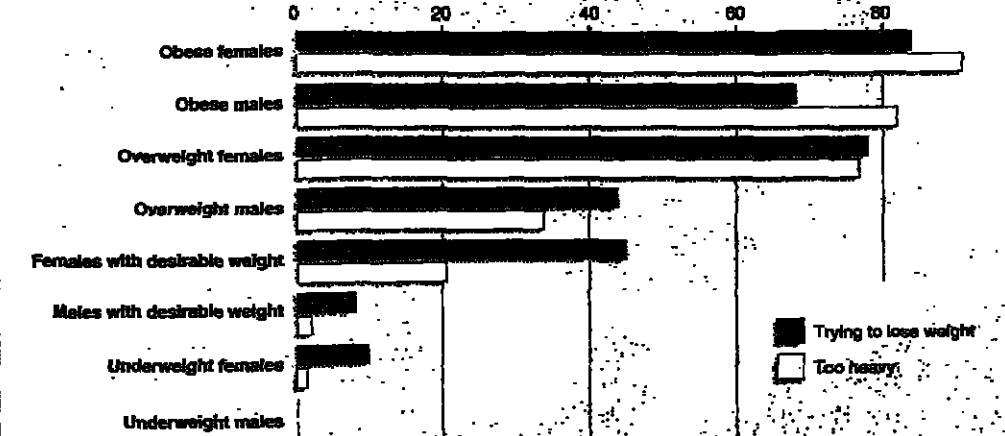
Percentage of children aged 4-15 with emotional/behavioural difficulties

**Smoking**

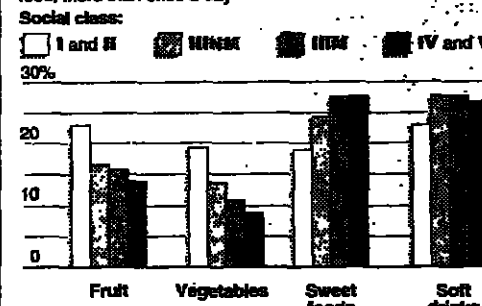
Percentage of youngsters with nicotine in their bodies

**Weight and self image**

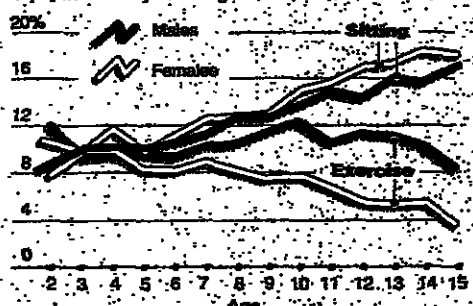
Percentage of 16-24-year-olds who reported themselves as too heavy, and percentage trying to lose weight

**Food**

Percentage of children aged 2-15 who ate each type of food, more than once a day

**Physical activity**

Average number of hours children spent in the last week in physical activity or 'sitting'



Social classes: 1: professional; 2: managerial/technical; 3: skilled (manual and non manual); 4: partly skilled; 5: unskilled

State of children's health linked to their place on the class ladder, survey shows

Sarah Boseley
Health Correspondent

THE shocking state of the health of the nation's children and young people was disclosed yesterday in a Department of Health survey. It paints a picture of overweight youngsters who take little exercise, eat sweets and snack foods, and smoke and drink to excess.

The general trends in young people's health are not good — but they are much worse in the lower social classes than in more wealthy professional families.

The Chief Medical Officer, Liam Donaldson, said yesterday that the data was further evidence of the essential links between social and economic circumstances and health.

"Looking at children is very important because of the potential for these characteristics carrying through into adult life," he said.

The report, *The Health of Young People '96-97*, is one of the most detailed studies of the health and lifestyle of children and young people. It has been compiled from data collected over three years of the annual Health Survey for England, and was commissioned by the Department of Health.

It found that a third of 16- to 24-year-olds were either overweight or obese, with more young men (23 per cent) overweight but more women (8 per cent) having reached obesity.

"It is quite a worrying picture, thinking of the future implications for their health," said Paula Frith, clinical lecturer at the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London medical school, one of the researchers. Obesity is linked to diabetes, coronary heart disease, and other life-threatening illnesses.

There were more worries at

the other end of the scale, where about half of the 16- to 24-year-old women whose weight still said they had tried to lose the pounds, and 10 per cent of those who are underweight are dieting.

None of this is helped by the poor diet of many children. The report shows a stark difference in the eating habits of the different social classes. Less than one-fifth of children eat the recommended levels of five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, but the children of professional families (class 1) are more likely to do better than those of the managerial and technical households (class 2) and so on down the social divide to unskilled manual workers' children. The scale is exactly reversed when it comes to eating biscuits, sweets, chocolates and cakes.

From the age of two to 15, both girls and boys spend less and less time engaged in physical activity outside

school, and more and more time sitting down, reading, doing homework or watching television.

Nearly a third of boys (29 per cent) and nearly half the girls (44 per cent) did not have half an hour's physical activity a week.

The report charts the dramatic take-up of smoking, which rises steeply from the age of 12. Researchers took saliva samples to detect the levels of cotinine — a substance that nicotine metabolises into in the body — to ensure smokers were being frank with them. By the age of 20-24, they found that 43 per cent of young men and 42 per cent of young women were smokers.

Among the younger children who smoked, there was no difference in social class, but the social gradient set in once the habit was established at around 16.

Young people tended to be binge drinkers. Over half the young men aged 16-24 said

they drank more than four units on at least one day a week, and a third drank more than eight units at one sitting, while 28 per cent of women drank more than three units one day a week and 13 per cent drank more than six at a single session.

Even in children's psychological health, a class divide showed up. The poorer the family, the more likely they were to report emotional and behavioural difficulties in their children.

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Pinochet fightback before law lords

Clare Dyer

THE unprecedented bid by General Augusto Pinochet's lawyers to set aside the law lords' ruling that he has no immunity from prosecution will be heard today in the same Lords committee room where Lord Hoffmann and two of his fellow judges were persuaded that international law no longer protected heads of state who committed crimes against humanity.

The general's lawyers are attempting to have the three-judge panel set aside because there is no higher court to which they can appeal.

The argument, which is likely to continue tomorrow, will be heard by five judges — three current law lords (Lords Browne-Wilkinson, Hutton and Hope) — and two who have recently retired (Lords Goff and Nolan).

Pinochet's lawyers will argue that Lord Hoffmann's role as chairman of Amnesty International Charity Limited, the human rights organisation's fund-raising arm, and his wife's employment as an administrative assistant to Amnesty, created an appearance of bias, resulting in a flawed decision.

If the law lords were to agree that the judgment could not stand, the whole appeal would have to be heard again.

The hearing is part of a two-pronged attack the general's legal team hopes will secure his release to Chile. The law firm, Kingsley Napley, revealed yesterday that it intended to seek a judicial review of Jack Straw's decision to let the extradition process begin.

Although no grounds were given, such reviews are usually made on the basis that a home secretary was wrong in law, or did not exercise discretion properly.

It is unlikely the application will be made before the new year. By then, Pinochet might know whether his appeal to the House of Lords has succeeded.

If the panel backed the original judgment, the decision would probably be announced

immediately. If the five set it aside, they would be likely to take a little longer to explain their reasons.

Lord Browne-Wilkinson, the senior law lord, is an immensely experienced, highly respected moderate. He was responsible for initiating the law lords' inquiry into "fat cat" legal aid barristers' fees.

Lord Hutton is seen as conservative; Lords Hope, Goff and Nolan are moderates.

Pinochet's lawyers are not expected to argue that the law lord was actually motivated by bias in reaching his decision. Since Amnesty was allowed to intervene in the case and strongly pressed the argument that the general should have no immunity, Lord Hoffmann should have stepped down if any party wished it, they will argue.

Had he stood down and a different law lord taken his place, the decision could have gone the other way.

Amnesty will not play a role in today's hearing, but its lawyers have been liaising with the Crown Prosecution Service, which is opposing the application on behalf of the Spanish government.

Ann Jones QC, for the CPS, is expected to argue that the lords were deciding a pure point of law — whether state immunity covers crimes against humanity — and the facts of Gen Pinochet's case were not strictly relevant to their decision.

The CPS is also likely to cite a fund-raising letter from Amnesty International last year to Kingsley Napley, signed by Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Bingham, Lord Chief Justice, and Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls. The letter and a booklet make it clear that Lord Hoffmann is chairman of the charity and of the appeal for funds for a building.

Although the general's lawyers have been careful not to discuss their strategy, it seems clear they expect a long haul: the Chilean air force jet which had been waiting at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire to take General Pinochet home flew back to South America yesterday.

Clinton gets an historic show of hands

continued from page 1

had sent "a powerful message, not to the government, but to the people of Israel. You will touch people on the streets there. You will reach their hearts there."

Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, appeared to accept the decision: "It is a very important step. I welcome it. But he added: 'That's not enough. There have to be acts.'

For Mr Clinton, the show of hands was good enough. The assembly roared. Councillors gave him a standing ovation of an intensity that even the Democrats find it hard to muster these days. The president may be sapped by the threat of impeachment back home, but abroad he can still generate enough electricity to light up an emerging nation.

"We will look back at today in the years to come and this is what we are going to remember — that President Clinton came and it was the beginning," said Alim Hmeida, aged 33, an electrician who waited since early morning on the president's

route. Hours before there was any sign of the Marine 1 helicopter, Mr Hmeida's three children had grown weary of the flags he made wave.

Inside the hall, Jihad Wazir was even more delighted. He is the son of Khalil Wazir, better known as Abu Jihad, the Palestinian guerrilla leader killed by Israeli commandos in 1988. The younger Mr Wazir is a smoothly spoken businessman who helped to organise the visit. "It went like clockwork," he said. "History was made today."

Mr Arafat is not expected to declare a Palestinian state for five months, and it is unlikely Washington will risk its relations with Israel by recognising the new entity. But one of Mr Clinton's greatest talents is his mastery of mood music, and for the Palestinians he orchestrated a symphony of empathy and solidarity from the moment Marine 1 landed.

At Gaza's new international airport Mr Clinton seemed to take almost as much pleasure as Mr Arafat in cutting the ceremonial ribbon. It went so well that Mr Arafat kept on cut-



ting, slicing off samples for the president and First Lady.

The speeches later in the day were Clintonian masterpieces of the kind of verbal manipulation already familiar to the rest of the world. He said the Palestinian people "now have a chance to determine their own destiny on their own land." It stopped well short of endorsing a Pal-

estinian right to a state but, once again, Mr Clinton had promised the moon while keeping his legal options open.

The Palestinian leadership was not in a mood to quibble. Its two objectives had been to make sure the president set foot on Palestinian territory and that he survived the day. To that end, a stifling security blanket was spread over Gaza City. No private cars were allowed in the city centre, every window overlooking the cavalcade route was checked and rechecked, and all police except members of Mr Arafat's personal security unit were deprived of their weapons.

In the crowd, a 22-year-old veteran of street battles with Israeli soldiers, Haziq Said, admitted to burning US flags by the dozen during the occupation. Yesterday, he warily embraced the new era. "Yes I burned flags before, but that was when America was always supporting the Israelis," he said. "This is different. We have been given respect. I feel the start of a new Palestinian-US friendship."

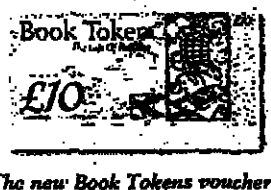
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Cut-price embryos, or even sperm, is not a concept that inspires a great deal of confidence; there is no way of telling what one is getting and who one is getting it from, and since the whole transaction would necessarily be illicit, there is no protection involved for the purchaser.

Hettie Judah on the trade in human gametes

32 page 3



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THE GIFT OF READING

Dr. J. L. 10.15.00

Global pharmaceutical companies fulminating at move to outlaw four antibiotics routinely used as growth promoters in animal feed

Legal battle looms over EU ban on farm drugs

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE European Union last night appeared to be on a legal collision course with pharmaceutical companies, as ministers approved a ban on four of the eight antibiotics used as growth promoters in animal feed.

The US multinational Pfizer had already threatened legal action if its product virginiamycin were banned, and the industry insisted yesterday that there were no serious threats to human health.

A statement issued from Pfizer's New York headquarters claimed: "The commission has not followed established procedures, has disregarded scientific analysis and has taken quotations from expert reports out of context."

"Public authorities have distorted expert reports in a way which is unfair to the makers of the animal feed antibiotic additives, to the farmers who rely on them to produce healthy food economically and to the consumers

who will ultimately bear the additional cost."

Agriculture ministers met here yesterday to discuss the ban, which could cost the chemicals industry up to £500 million a year. Twelve EU agriculture ministers, including Britain's Nick Brown, endorsed the commission proposal, with Belgium, Portugal and Spain abstaining. The ban — which Britain supports while further tests are carried out — will be phased in over six months, with the use of the antibiotics outlawed on consumer health grounds.

The eight antibiotics used in feedstuffs together represent 15 per cent of the total sold worldwide each year. The antibiotics, spiramycin, bacitracin zinc, tylosin, phosphate and virginiamycin — sold as Stafac 500 by SmithKline Beecham — are produced by some of the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world such as Pfizer and Eli Lilly. They are used in animal feed to promote rapid growth and disease resistance.

But the commission believes that traces of the anti-

biotics passed on through the food chain, particularly from pork and poultry meat products, could increase human resistance to medicines containing the drugs. However, no scientific link has been conclusively established.

Between two-thirds and four-fifths of cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry are believed to be fed antibiotics at some stage in their rearing.

It was clear last night that, even if the member states could not agree on a ban, the European Commission which proposed it will act before Christmas to impose a prohibition unilaterally.

All four products are already banned in Sweden, as are some of them in Finland and Denmark. For other member states the ban would be implemented from July 1 next year.

When hormones were banned in animal feed in the EU a decade ago there was widespread evasion and a flourishing black market in growth promoters in some countries such as Belgium.

That ban also produced a confrontation with the US

and other countries such as Australia, where hormones are allowed in animal rearing.

The Soil Association claimed the EU antibiotics decision would be an important landmark towards safer food production, but called for the ban to be extended to the four remaining antibiotics.

The association is particularly concerned that the agricultural industry may increase its use of the other antibiotics when the ban comes into force, particularly virginiamycin which is used in broiler poultry production. It said it had received reports that one supermarket chain was already encouraging suppliers to switch to the drug en masse.

Its policy adviser, Richard Young, said: "There is substantial evidence that the use of these drugs on farms has led to drug resistant disease in hospitals. Antibiotics save lives and bring enormous benefits for humanity and farm animals, but we should never have squandered them just to make animals grow faster."

Intensively reared pigs like this may pass antibiotic traces through the food chain to humans PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARQUES

West affair mistakes not heeded

David Brindley, Social Services Correspondent

SERIOUS failures have been uncovered in child protection services in Gloucestershire, despite the county's traumatic experience in the Fred and Rose West affair.

An independent inquiry commissioned in the wake of the West horrors has concluded that national guidance has not been fully implemented in the NHS in Gloucestershire, that many health professionals are unfamiliar with the guidance and that most have received no training in identifying child sexual abuse.

The report, by a team led by barrister David Spicer, who specialises in child protection law, says: "It is clear arrangements for child protection have not been given the status and consideration during recent years that government expects."

Care agencies were strongly criticised after the West case for failing to act on abuse and killings over a period of more than 25 years. Clear signals were said to have been missed.

The review, commissioned by Gloucestershire health authority, included assessment of the handling of 64 cases of suspected child abuse or neglect in 1995/96 — a period after the West af-

fair had come to light. Fred West was hanged in 1997 for 10 murders including that of his daughter Heather, 16.

Mr Spicer concludes: "My disappointing conclusion is that the national guidance has not been fully implemented."

His report makes 34 recommendations including urgent action to improve training. Only one in four NHS professionals surveyed was found to have attended training in recognising signs of sexual abuse — and only one in eight had completed the full course.

The authority has drawn up an action plan in response to the report, although it says that it and local NHS trusts have made progress since the review started last year.

Jeff James, the authority's chief executive, said: "We are committed to the action plan, which will enable us to build on the good work that has already been done and then tackle some of the more long-term recommendations highlighted within the report."

The report has been seized on by opponents of plans to make £100,000 cuts in health which threaten eight posts from next April.

Charles Lomas, regional officer for the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association, said: "The authority should petition the Government for more funding. 'We are presented with a gloomy picture of disjointed services.'"

Arms firms find export loopholes

Richard Norton-Taylor

ARMS companies are exploiting loopholes in British export controls to supply weapons to countries, including Indonesia and Sudan, with a record of internal repression and human rights abuses, an investigation by Oxfam claims.

A report published today says arms manufacturers can bypass controls by licensing the production of weapons in other countries.

It singles out Heckler & Koch, a German-based manufacturer of rifles, pistols and sub-machine guns, which was taken over by Royal Ordnance, a subsidiary of British Aerospace, in 1991.

Countries where the company's G3 rifle has been licensed for production include Iran, Burma, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey. Its sub-machine guns are manufactured in Iran and Turkey.

This year, MKEK, the Turkish firm which produces Heckler & Koch weapons under licence, agreed to supply 500 sub-machine guns to the Indonesian police in a deal which the British government would have blocked, Oxfam says.

In other deals, Heckler & Koch rifles have been supplied to Sudan, probably via Iran. Last year, an Oxfam worker in Sudan found ammunition for Heckler & Koch rifles made in

Pakistan. A consignment of the company's rifles made under licence were recently shipped to Angola in breach of sanctions.

The report also says counter-insurgency vehicles made by Otakar, a Turkish company, in a deal with Land Rover, have been supplied to Algeria.

There is no suggestion that the companies involved acted illegally in any way.

Controls are also avoided by arms brokers and private security companies arranging deals where weapons never pass through Britain, it says.

This was the case with Sandline, the company at the heart of arms to Sierra Leone affair, and Mil-Tech, an Isle of Man based firm, which arranged the sale of weapons in 1994 to Rwanda, then embroiled in a genocidal conflict.

Oxfam's investigation also points to the inadequacy of controls over end user certificates. Last May, a cargo of military equipment was transported from Belgium to Kent International Airport and loaded on a plane without any checks. The plane eventually landed in South Africa with nothing on board.

A spokesman for Heckler & Koch said yesterday that the company's licence agreements were scrutinised by Whitehall. The Department of Trade and Industry said it had no control over deals negotiated by third countries.

Blair and Hague trade insults over summit

Michael White, Political Editor

TONY Blair yesterday insisted that Labour's agenda for reform of the European Union had gained ground at the EU's weekend summit in Vienna, but was accused by William Hague of selling out Britain's national interest.

In a flurry of abuse the Conservative leader accused Mr Blair of being a spineless and two-faced whiner, more concerned with his media image than with the substantial issues. For his part Mr Blair proclaimed that in the shadow cabinet the "head-bangers" and "lunatics" have "taken over the asylum" on European policy.

The Prime Minister cited a list of EU reviews, on long-term unemployment, skills training, and social exclusion which all gave a Blairite ring to the summit. "Jobs remain Europe's top priority. The strategy developed over the last 18 months is beginning to bear fruit, with over one million jobs created in the EU last year," he said.

Mr Hague, who paid a weekend visit to Vienna for talks with centre-right colleagues, got his retaliation in first yesterday at a press conference where he accused Labour of "going with the flow" of integration, despite Mr Blair's assurances to the contrary.

He cited the end-of-summit communiqué for stating in its first sentence that "European integration has gained new momentum". Mr Blair had failed three crucial tests: to make Europe flexible, not regulated; to make enlargement to the south and east the EU's priority; and to make clear "the limits of political integration", he said.

At yesterday's briefing Francis Maude and Michael Howard, the Tory Treasury and foreign affairs spokesmen, weighed in with a mixture of detailed quotation from the summit commu-

William Hague accusing Labour at a press conference yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: DYLAN MARTINEZ

iqué and media reports to prove that Germany, France and other leading EU players are adamant that greater co-ordination of economic policy — including tax — is bound to follow the arrival of the euro.

"No amount of media spin will hide the fact that as a direct result of Tony Blair's failure of leadership Britain now faces the greatest threat to its independence for de-

cades," declared Mr Hague. In a significant Commons exchange with his own broadly supportive backbenches, Mr Blair was told by leftwinger, Harry Barnes, that all integration would be acceptable provided the "democratic deficit" is addressed within Europe. The Prime Minister conceded a dilemma: he wanted to see "as much democracy in the EU as

possible consistent with national governments still having a role to play".

While most people wanted to proceed cautiously over issues like tax harmonisation, they must also remember that "the governments of the EU are themselves democratically elected. When they come together to negotiate they do so on a democratic basis", Mr Blair said.

Peers stage show of defiance on European bill

Lucy Ward, Political Correspondent

CONSERVATIVE peers will tonight stage a final show of defiance against the European Elections Bill in a move likely to force the Government to invoke the Parliament Act and see the legislation on the statute book before Christmas.

In what may be the final chapter in a long-running Lords-Commons tussle, the new Tory leader in the Upper House, Lord Strathclyde, yesterday published an amend-

ment to the Government's bill to bring in a closed list system of proportional representation in Euro elections next June.

If the amendment is carried in the Lords tonight, the bill will become law under the Parliament Act, possibly receiving royal assent by Christmas on Thursday.

The Tories' challenge at second reading — a tactic last used almost a decade ago — is being billed by the party as a continuation of its "principled opposition" to the closed list plan, but could help both sides in the stand-off. The Tory

peers, conscious that a drawn-out war of attrition over the bill could cost them support, will gain a high profile chance to make their point, and, they hope, cause the Government embarrassment by forcing it to use the Parliament Act to override the Lords. The Government, meanwhile, would gain by seeing the measure pushed through swiftly, ensuring that it becomes law by the January deadline for introducing the new PR voting system for June elections.

One Lords observer said last night: "Carrying on this debate according to its original timetable would have forced the House rigid and the Tories would have had a lot of bricks."

Lord Strathclyde's strategy was agreed at a meeting yesterday with Tory leader William Hague, party chairman Michael Ancram and other members of the shadow cabinet.

The "reasoned amendment" voices the Opposition's view that closed lists are undemocratic because they "end the historic right of the British people to choose the candidates they wish to be elected".

Watchdog for arts in a 'quest' for quality

Dan Gledhill, Arts Correspondent

THE WAGS were hoping it would be called O2art. But in the end the Department of Culture came up with a name for its arts watchdog announced yesterday that, while lacking in comic possibilities, reveals in the portentousness that has become the Government's trademark.

Quest, the Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team, will be responsible for improving standards of efficiency and management of the arts across the arts spectrum.

Announcing the initiative, part of a £250 million plan, the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, said: "It's not meant to override the normal accountability procedures of the Sports Council, the Arts Council or anyone else. What this can be is complementary."

The watchdog, said a department spokesman, would start work next week and would investigate cases such

as the revelation that salary levels at the Royal Opera House were much higher than at comparable institutions such as the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Other initiatives revealed in yesterday's wide-ranging announcement included the restoration of free admission to national museums and galleries for children from next year. The following year would see this extended to pensioners.

Winners in the spending allocation included the Arts Council of England, which sees a 15 per cent increase in its budget, to £227 million from next April, followed by 5 per cent and 7 per cent increases in the following two years.

It will be merged with the Crafts Council, one of several structural reforms announced yesterday. Others include a new agency for film.

Museums and galleries are also to come under a new governing body, which will assume responsibilities for museums, libraries and archives.

Boating tragedy 'ripped heart' from community

Gerard Soenan

THE mother of the only survivor of the Iona boating accident yesterday said the incident had ripped the heart from the 86-strong community.

Helen Grant, mother of 33-year-old Gordon Grant who is recovering from hypothermia in Oban hospital, said the whole island felt the pain of the Christmas outing which ended in disaster.

"We are a famous island but not a famous people and we would give anything not to have this situation. I am the lucky one — my son is the one who survived but you have to understand that I felt like a mother to these other boys as well. It is a great pain we all feel. These boys were the future for this island and we have now lost that," she said.

The search for Logie MacFadyen, 24, Ailsa Douglas, 19, and David Kirkpatrick, 23, all from the island, began on Sunday morning after Mr Grant swam to shore on Mull and raised the alarm. Mr Grant managed to swim back to the tiny village of Fionnphort after the dinghy sank in rough seas.

The body of their friend Robert Hay, 23, was later found washed up on the coast of Mull. Coastguards say there is little hope of finding anyone else alive.

At first light yesterday morning the small population of Iona mobilised itself in the hunt for the bodies. They searched the shoreline before boarding the ferry to cross the Sound of Iona where they linked up with the coastguard search.

Mrs Grant said no outsider could ever understand what it was like for Iona to lose so many young men.

"We are all absolutely stunned and there is total disbelief that this has happened," said islander Jeff Minter, aged 46. "There are so few young people here and they were such a lively group."

Last night Mull coastguard was extending its search eastwards, following prevailing tides. Throughout the day police and coastguard helicopters scanned the Sound of Iona while police divers searched in the shallows along the island's rocky outcrops.

The boating tragedy happened on Sunday morning when the five men took a dinghy back home to Iona after attending a Christmas dinner dance on nearby Mull.

As the group was crossing the narrow Sound which separates the two islands, a heavy swell waterlogged the vessel and it sank.

Yesterday a small group of islanders stood on the coastline waiting for news of the men despite fears for the worst.

McDonald's scraps plastic spoons used by drug dealers

Gerard Soenan

THE McDonald's fast food chain has withdrawn plastic spoons after it emerged that drug dealers were using them to measure out heroin deals.

Detectives in Edinburgh found the spoons in the homes of suspected drug dealers during a series of raids last week. Each spoon holds exactly 100mg of powder.

McDonald's replaced the spoons with flatware after it emerged that drug dealers were using them to measure heroin and other substances, such as glucose, which they use to dilute the drug. The spoons mean they

do not have to keep scales, a sign of dealing often used as evidence in court.

A spokeswoman for Lothian and Borders police, which made the discovery, said spoons found in the homes of suspected drug dealers were taken as evidence.

A McDonald's spokesman said: "There was a design change a few months ago, and use by drug dealers was one of the issues we were looking at after consultation with the police."

Lothian and Borders police seized almost £500,000 worth of drugs and cash, as well as guns and stolen property, when they raided about 250 homes last week in Operation Toll.

BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT 1986

Notice under paragraph 7 of Schedule 17 to the Act

Notice is hereby given that Birmingham Midshires Building Society, Register No. 738B, whose principal office is at Pendeford Business Park, Wobaston Road, Wolverhampton WV9 5HZ, desires to transfer its business to Halifax plc, and that the society has applied to the Building Societies Commission to confirm the transfer.

Any interested party may make written representations to the Commission and/or give notice of intention to make oral representations to the Commission with respect to the application. Written representations and notices of intention to make oral representations should be received by the Commission, at Victoria House, 30-34 Kingsway, London WC2B 6ES by 22 January 1999. Oral representations will be heard by the Commission on 23 February 1999 at a time and place to be determined by the Commission.

CPY 100 1520

Arnella Gentleman

Commander Paddy Tomkins, of the Met police, said the man was a risk to himself and others. He appeared to be a thrill seeker, who had been attacking in exposed places. On occasion, he has threatened his victims with violence if they contacted the police.

Cdr Tomkins said: "The offences are likely to become even more serious than those committed so far — his confidence appears to be growing."

The offences linked are:

- A serious sexual assault on two schoolgirls, aged 14 and 15, in woodland at the Mount in Rayleigh, Essex, at 5pm on August 12, 1997.

1. Woburn, MA
Tuesday 13/05/98

2. St. John's Wood Mass
Sunday 13/05/98

3. Middlesex Park Mass
Tuesday 19/05/98

4. Mattapan, MA
Saturday 23/05/98

5. South End, MA
Wednesday 28/05/98

6. Boston, MA
Wednesday 28/05/98

7. Boston, MA
Thursday 29/05/98

8. Boston, MA
Friday 30/05/98

9. Boston, MA
Saturday 31/05/98

There are some significant gaps in the chronology but because of the nature of the case, the offender there is a high probability that there are people out there who have been so terrified and traumatised that they feel they can't go to the police," Cdr Tomkins said.

Detective Superintendent David Weaver, of Essex police, assisting the investigation, Operation Monarch, said: "Detailed analysis and investigation has revealed strong links between these 10 offences in terms of the suspect's special interests, modus operandi and the duration and method of attack."

Detectives said there were some scientific factors to link the attacks, but added the suspect appeared to know how to frustrate forensic scientists.

The suspect is a white, possibly tanned, man aged between 20 and 30, of medium build, and about 5ft 8in to 5ft 10in tall. He has short brown hair, sometimes described as wavy on top, and speaks with

Martin Wainwright

one of their three Mercedes cars.

Pro-Ingham locals in the Surrey commuter belt united behind "a good neighbour and a good guy", well-liked in Neighbourhood Watch circles and generally an ornament to the district.

But builder Barry Cripps, whose extension, vividly, recently house and sauna have previously infuriated the Inghams, hit back at the angry and overbearing neighbour on the other side of a thin dividing line of shrubs.

"Sir Bernard's overbearing behaviour over a number of years has now culminated in an incident on Sunday in which he threatened to smash the door of the Cripps' car," the family protested in a statement read to journalists by another neighbour, 60-year-old Mervyn Toogood.

"The motivation for this continuing behaviour appears to be that Sir Bernard's court action over a boundary dispute two years ago collapsed on the first day of trial."

The short-fused Inghams have acknowledged the neighbour's anger and vowed his runner "does up and down

Helen Carter

THE parents of a boy left severely brain damaged after a hospital mix-up over blood for a transfusion were seeking a multi-million pound payout at the High Court yesterday.

James Green, now aged six, needed a transfusion for jaundice, and four days after his birth in March 1982 at the Princess Alexandra hospital in Harlow, Essex, he received a transfusion of the wrong blood instead of O rhesus positive.

The blood he was given had been intended for another baby with the same surname.

As a result James suffered convulsions, heart failure and acute pneumonia. He was taken to Stobart Ochs QCs, led Mr Justice Thomas: "The tragic consequence was serious and permanent brain damage."

Dudley and Patricia Green, of Stambourne, are seeking damages from North Essex Health Authority on behalf of their son.

"James cannot walk, cannot stand without support and cannot do anything for himself."

His mother told the court: "I particularly feel responsible for what happened in the first place, and feel awful that he is prostrate," and wept.

She described the family's hand-to-mouth existence. "We are just trying to survive and have been for seven years."

The health authority admitted liability in the case in 1986, but the Greens say many of the sums claimed by the family. However, there is still a dispute over James's care regime, continuing on the cost of his education and what hydrotherapy pool should be built for him.

The hearing continues today.

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French riot police watch a bus burn (right) after clashes with more than 300 youths in the suburbs of Toulouse on Sunday night. The violence, which continued yesterday, was triggered by the death of an unarmed teenager, Habib Muhammed (left).
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHE BVA

French police held after youth is shot

Jon Henley in Paris

TWO policemen were arrested and a senior officer was suspended yesterday as the shooting of an unarmed teenager of Arab origin sparked a second day of rioting in Toulouse in south-west France.

Last night groups of youths stood on the roofs of buildings in the working-class suburb of Mirail, showering riot police with chunks of concrete in protest at the killing of Habib

Muhammed, aged 17, on Sunday. Six police officers have been injured in the violence and a French radio journalist is in a stable condition after being stabbed in the stomach yesterday.

At least 200 infuriated rioters looted shops and set fire to a police station, 20 cars and a passing bus on Sunday leading to a walkout by the city's bus drivers, who claim it is too dangerous to work.

Officials also closed the

underground railway stations in the working-class neighbourhoods of La Reynerie and Belle-Pontaine to avoid vandalism.

The riots have prompted fears of further violent clashes in French towns and cities during the traditionally tense Christmas period.

The Toulouse state prosecutor, Michel Bréard, said the two detained patrolmen accused of shooting Muhammed — one a national serviceman completing his

military service as a police auxiliary — would be treated "like ordinary citizens and presumed innocent" until the inquiry was completed.

In Paris the acting interior minister, Jean-Jack Quéranno, suspended from duty the head of the four-man patrol involved in the shooting.

The authorities are also awaiting the results of a post-mortem on the teenager which were due last night.

According to Mr Bréard, the patrolmen had opened fire

on Muhammed at about 3.30am after they spotted him trying to break into a car with an accomplice.

Hit by a stray shot through the chest and shoulder, the teenager managed to drive a short distance before he collapsed and crawled under a parked car. His body was found at 6am.

But the youth's friends claim the police fired six times, hitting him twice. They also claim he collapsed in a gutter and was left unattended

for more than an hour before paramedics arrived to find him dead.

Mr Bréard said the police men did not report the shooting when they returned from patrol.

The incident was a near repeat of the shooting of Abdelkader Bouziane, aged 16, who was killed by police while trying to drive through a roadblock last December. On Sunday six cars were set alight and petrol bombs were thrown at a police car at the

scene of his death in Dammarie-les-Lys, south of Paris.

The Toulouse suburbs have been tense for months.

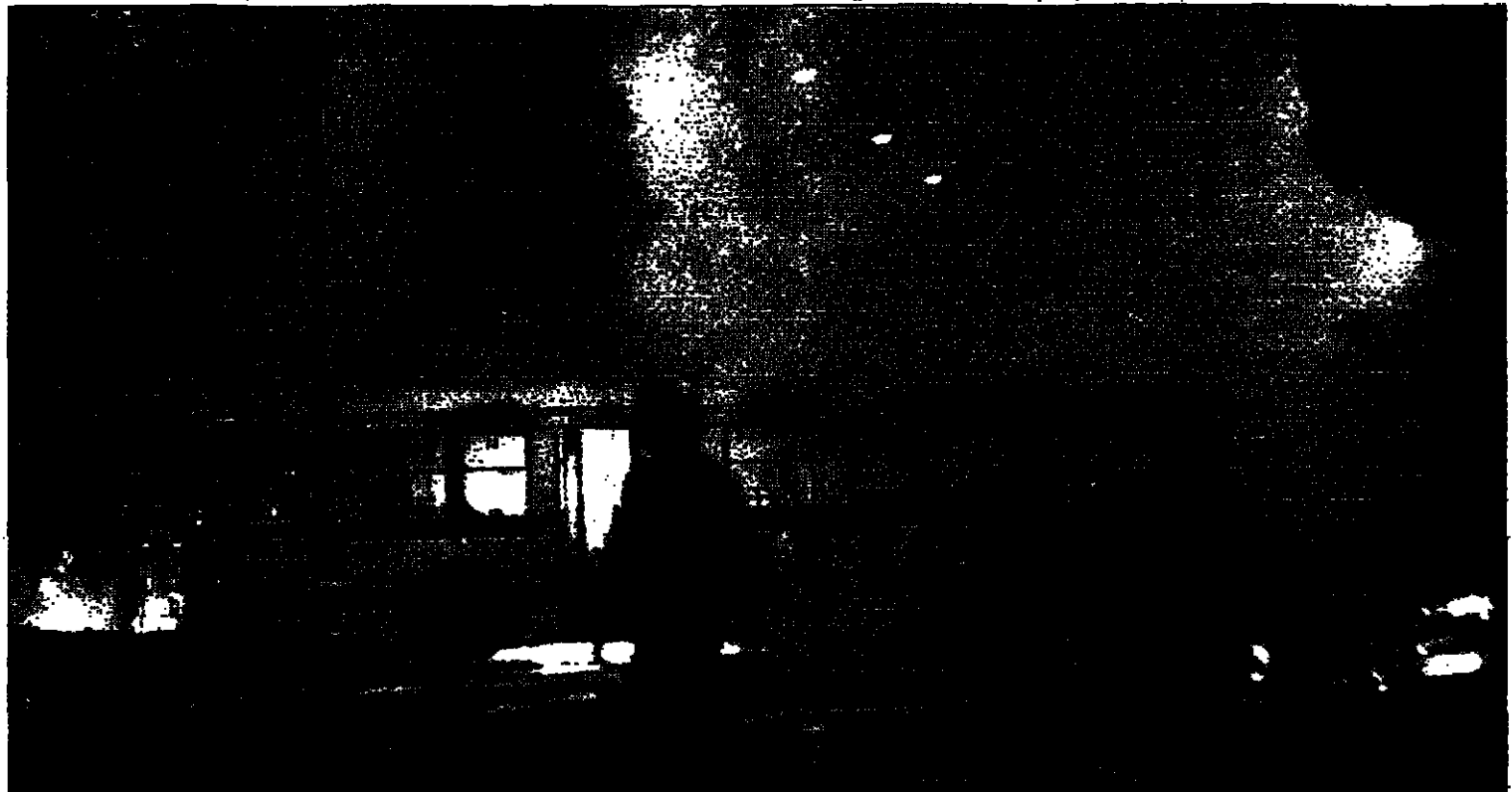
Youths in Mirail, which has a 35 per cent unemployment rate, have complained they face constant police harassment and are stopped for identity checks up to 10 times a day.

Police justified their heavy presence by saying they had recently dismantled a gang from the area which had held

up six banks and robbed 20 different shops.

Violence between police and gangs of youths — many of them French-born children of North African Arab immigrants living in poor areas — has become increasingly common in France.

According to government statistics, incidents of urban violence have risen from just over 3,000 in 1992 to nearly 16,000 last year, while reports of attacks on policemen have surged by 25 per cent in a year.



Court jester to 11 presidents watches friends and fans lift the lid on secret life

Michael Ellison in New York

BOB HOPE once said that he would rather be killed than ignored. Having read the comments of his supposed fans and friends, he may have to think again.

Woody Allen, who chose his career path after seeing Hope in *Road to Morocco*, says that his admiration is limited to movies. "In other media, particularly television, he was not very good," he says of Hope's 24 television shows.

"He was lazy and nobody cared. He would come out and do these old-fashioned sketches and after a while he was unashamedly read-

ing from the cards. It was just awful."

Hope's former manager, Elliott Kozak, says the comedian is "the most self-centred person" he has ever known.

And Frank Lieberman, his publicist for 41 years, says: "He never walked past a mirror without looking at himself or smoothing his hair."

In an otherwise flattering profile in the new issue of the *New Yorker* magazine, Melville Shavelson, who wrote and directed several of Hope's movies, says he used to humiliate his writers when it came to pay-day.

"Every week we'd gather

at the bottom of the stairs. He would go up to his office, write out our cheques and make paper airplanes out of them. Then he'd yell out our names and throw them down. You had to jump up and catch it. He said he had to do it because it was the only exercise he got."

Larry Gelbart, who wrote *Hope* before going on to create *M*A*S*H* for television, said the man who has played the role of court jester to 11 presidents was cheap.

He remembered Hope telling him: "Ten o'clock. My house. Tomorrow morning. Bring your own orange juice."

The comedian was one of the best-known faces on the planet but more of a stranger to his own family. His elder daughter Linda says: "I don't feel that I really know him. That's a kind of sadness for me because I would have liked to know him better."

But Dolores, his wife of 64 years, says she is untroubled by his reputation as a womaniser. "It never bothered me because I thought I was better-looking than anybody else."

Hope spends his time at home whistling old tunes and often declines to wear a hearing aid. "They can hear what I'm saying," Hope was quoted as saying.

Multi-ethnic Bosnia still a dream

Can the donors countries which meet today keep the divided country from splitting into three?

Chris Bird in Sarajevo

AT THE annual meeting of Bosnia's 50 donor countries, which opens today in Madrid, delegates of the so-called Peace Implementation Council (PIC) will be asking whether the international community will ever be able to restore — or quit — a multi-ethnic Bosnia.

Despite pumping an estimated \$9 billion (\$5.5 billion) annually into policing and rebuilding the Balkan state of 4 million, each side — Serb, Croat and Muslim — is consolidating ethnic entities and

working against reintegration of the country.

On the face of it the international effort to force Serbs, Croats and Muslims to live together, backed up by 35,000 Nato-led troops in the Bosnian Stabilisation Force (S-For), is starting to pay off.

Cars carry non-ethnic-specific registration plates and the convertible mark, a new currency pegged to the German unit, has been introduced.

But while Bosnia's international governor, Carlos Westendorp, and other senior officials chant the mantra of a

multi-ethnic Bosnia, the lower ranks of the international presence are wringing their hands in frustration.

"With Dayton you're trying to create a mini-European Union, but as if it was 1946," said one Western diplomat.

At last year's PIC meeting in Bonn, Mr Westendorp was granted sweeping powers to force through laws which were not acceptable to all the nationalist leaderships.

No agreement could be reached on a Bosnian flag but Mr Westendorp created one anyway.

Now the new flag flies in predominantly Muslim Sarajevo but Serbs keep their own flag flying in their "capital" of Banja Luka in western Bosnia, while the ethnic Croats fly the flag of neighbouring Croatia.

The war legacy is still there, and there is a strong divide between Bosnians (Muslims) and Croats," said Saumya Mitra, deputy director of the World Bank mission in Bosnia.

Western officials are worried that Bosnia is splitting into three, not two.

"It has not returned to a multi-ethnic country in any way," said one senior Western diplomat in Sarajevo.

To demonstrate, he pointed to a map showing the ethnic make-up of Bosnia before and after the war. In 1991 the map is a collage of ethnic communities. In 1996 there are three thick bands — red for the Serb entity in the north and east, green for the Muslims in the centre and a new blue in the south-west to mark what is a Croat entity in all but name.

Korean war captives free after 45 years

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

TWO South Koreans, listed as killed in action in the Korean war, have escaped from communist North Korea after more than 40 years in captivity.

Park Dong-il, aged 71, and Kim Bok-ki, aged 67, flew home from a "third country" where they had been in hiding since their escape earlier this year, the South Korean Agency for National Security Planning said yesterday.

The two men were taken prisoner by Chinese troops fighting for the North Koreans during the closing stages of the war in 1953 and handed over to the North. After several years in a prisoner of war camp near the North Korean capital Pyongyang, they were forced to labour at a coal mine in the north of the country.

Escaped PoWs tell horror stories about conditions in the North

Until their sudden reappearance, they were listed as killed in action by the South Korean defence ministry. Their names are believed to appear on headstones at Seoul national cemetery, among the thousands of others who never returned from the war. Little is known about their flight, but the "third country" where they sought refuge was probably China. The term is usually used by Seoul to avoid embarrassing Beijing, which has a treaty with Pyongyang to return defectors.

They were accompanied by Mr Kim's son and Mr Park's daughter, who married in April 1991.

The elderly men and their children are likely to have fled across the frozen Tumen river. That was the route taken earlier this year by Chang Mu-hwan, one of only three other South Korean prisoners of

war to have escaped the northern coal mines. It is a perilous journey. Escapees must elude the border guards and risk falling through the ice.

South Korean intelligence officers are now debriefing the men and their children. It is not known whether Mr Park or Mr Kim have any remaining relatives in the North, but previous escapees have said they feared for the safety of those left behind.

They have also recounted horror stories of conditions in the North. Mr Chang said about a million people had died of starvation in recent years and many others had been reduced to selling their blood to survive. Verifying such reports has been impossible because Pyongyang grants only limited access to outside observers.

The number of South Korean troops still held captive by the North is also unclear. Pyongyang insists that it took only 7,000 prisoners and repatriated them all at the end of the 1950-53 conflict. It also accuses Seoul of holding captives.

But South Korea claims that more than 20,000 prisoners of war remain unaccounted for, of whom 130 are still alive.

The two sides — separated by the most heavily fortified border in the world — have never signed a peace treaty and remain technically at war.

To break the impasse — the last of the cold war — the South Korean president, Kim Dae-jung, has pursued a "sunshine policy" of engagement with Pyongyang.

However, tensions have been rising since August, when North Korea launched a rocket over Japan. The United States is also threatening to cancel an agreement to build two nuclear energy plants in the North because of suspicions that Pyongyang has restarted its nuclear weapons programme.

Last week the North Korean military said the two sides were on the brink of war. The escape of the prisoners is likely to stir up further



Polluted water, such as this canal in Beijing where an old man is fishing, sexually transmitted diseases and smoking are listed as causes of sterility in China. PHOTOGRAPH: GREG BAKER

Modern living blamed for rise in Chinese sterility

John Gittings in Hong Kong

ARISE in sterility among Chinese males, affecting up to one in eight couples, is being blamed on pollution, smoking and sexually transmitted diseases, according to press reports in Beijing.

Chinese doctors are quoted as claiming that the increase in childless couples is directly associated with changes in living habits and the environment. The percentage of couples unable to conceive is said to have risen to 13 per cent from 3 per cent in the past 20 years.

The report was first carried in a Beijing tabloid last week but has since been broadcast by the official Xinhua news agency. The Beijing Morning Post listed heavy smoking and alcohol consumption, the rise in sexually transmitted dis-

eases (STDs) and water and air pollution as factors causing sterility.

STDs are now the third most common group of infectious diseases in China after dysentery and hepatitis, with 461,510 cases reported last year. This was a 16 per cent

increase on 1996, according to the news agency.

The World Bank calculated last year that 178,000 urban Chinese die prematurely because of pollution. An estimated 40 per cent of the land mass is affected by acid rain. Recent Japanese research

suggests environmental pollution may also be a factor in Japan's falling birth rate. Surveys have shown dangerously high levels of dioxin in mothers' milk, and male sperm counts appear to be falling.

Smoking among young Chinese is widely recognised to

have reached vast proportions. Two recent studies predict one-third of Chinese men now aged under 30 will die from tobacco-related illnesses. The preoccupation with male virility in China has deep historical roots and is linked to some Taoist cult

beliefs. It continues to provide a deadly motive for the capture and slaughter of rare wild animals, whose parts are believed to have a stimulating effect on sexual activity.

The Beijing Morning Post also suggests premarital sex has an adverse effect on fertility and blames "invisible killer waves" from household appliances for allegedly causing infertility.

The newspaper's mixture of science and superstition is likely to be widely reproduced under alarming headlines in the provincial Chinese press.

STDs were almost unknown until 20 years ago. In Maoist China — the demands of "socialist morality" ensured that sexual activity was largely limited to married couples. Tourists were isolated from the population and prostitution was unknown.

Sarah Besseley Health Correspondent

IN THE United States and Europe there is growing concern about pesticides and the chemicals used in making plastics, and their possible effect on fertility. Some of these chemicals — including those used in food packaging — mimic

the female hormone oestrogen and could be counteracting male hormones responsible for sperm.

Six years ago scientists at Copenhagen University announced that sperm counts were declining around the world. There is concern that chemical pollution is responsible. The Danish research ried

by Niels Skakkebaek in 1992 showed that sperm counts around the world had halved in the past 50 years.

A US report published a year ago backed the dropping sperm count theory. Reviews of all the available research by the National Academy of Sciences and the National Institutes of Health showed a strong and

significant decline in Europe and the US.

An international study is looking at the quality of men's sperm in Scotland, France, Denmark, Finland and Japan. It will look at the volume, concentration and motility of the sperm, the level of male hormones and the role of chemicals in the environment.

APR 10 1999

US president turns show of hands into momentous occasion as Palestinians revoke call for end of Israel

Clinton works peacemaking magic

David Sharrock
in Jerusalem

A SHOW of hands yesterday laid to rest the Palestinian goal of destroying Israel. In a gesture witnessed and applauded by President Bill Clinton as a historic moment in Middle East peacemaking, Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), rejected the demand for Israel's destruction and instead called for a commitment to peace and negotiations. You reaffirmed that commitment today.

Four times he thanked the members of the Palestine National Council for raising their hands, "standing tall and rejecting 'fully, finally and forever' the ideological underpinning of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

"This moment would have been inconceivable a decade ago... You have come to this point through a commitment to peace and negotiations. You reaffirmed that commitment today."

Acknowledging the difficulties they have faced in making peace with Israel, Mr Clinton praised Mr Arafat for his perseverance in the past five years, "because in all the tough times since, when in your own mind you had a hum-

Scandal beats statesmanship in news stakes

Martin Kettle in Washington

ALTHOUGH BILL Clinton is grappling with the stalled Middle East peace process, the travelling United States press corps remains preoccupied with the upcoming impeachment battle in Congress, which takes place less than 48 hours after Mr Clinton's return tonight.

Asked again about the crisis yesterday as he arrived in Gaza, he responded: "I've said what I've said about this. I don't believe it's in the interest of the United States and the American people to go through the impeachment process and have a trial in the Senate."

"That's why I have offered to make every compromise with Congress."

Later, in a brief exchange with White House reporters, he said: "I have offered to make every effort to make any reasonable compromise with the Congress, and I still believe that. I'm still willing to do that."

Presidential aides continued to work the phones in Washington all day yesterday, making it clear that they and Mr Clinton's

lawyers were available for private conversations with wavering members of Congress.

Meanwhile, a headline in the Washington Post read: "Scandal shadows a weary president."

Above it was a picture showing a tired-looking President Clinton answering yet another scandal-related question from a travelling reporter.

interim period next May, Mr Arafat did renew his call for a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem.

As for the 2,400 prisoners in Israeli jails — whose continued incarceration has sparked the worst violence on the West Bank in years — Mr Arafat said simply: "We would like our sons and our boys to come back home. They are the ones who struggled for the peace process since its inception."

Israel has so far released 250 of the 750 prisoners it promised to free under the Wye land-for-peace agreement, but many of them are ordinary criminals, not political prisoners.

The prisoner issue was a main topic at a trilateral meeting last night between Mr Clinton, Mr Netanyahu and Mr Arafat. A compromise was expected in which Washington will assist in deciding which prisoners may be freed.

It was also anticipated that the next handover of land to the Palestinians, due later this week, would also be discussed. Mr Netanyahu is facing a no-confidence motion in the Israeli parliament on Monday which might finish off his coalition government. A handover of land before that vote, as stipulated in the Wye agreement, would doubtless swing the far right, on which he relies, against him.

Palestinians clearly feel that Mr Clinton's visit has been in their interests. Uri Savir, the former director-general of Israel's foreign ministry who helped negotiate the Oslo accords in 1993, said Mr Clinton's visit would advance both peace and Palestinian hopes for independence.

"Today's date will go down in history as the day the United States gave de facto recognition of a Palestinian state," he said.

Puerto Ricans reject joining States

Martin Kettle in Washington

PUERTO RICO'S chances of becoming the 51st state of the United States receded sharply after a majority of the Caribbean island's voters failed to support a claim for statehood in a weekend referendum.

Only 46.5 per cent voted for US statehood, the same share as in the previous non-binding referendum in 1993. The referendum gave Puerto Rico's 2.2 million voters four choices for the status of their island, which is currently a self-governing "commonwealth" under US rule.

Although the voters were also able to opt for two forms of independence and a disputed definition of the existing commonwealth status, 50.2 per cent of votes went to "none of the above" — which most observers are treating as a vote of confidence in the status quo. Seventy-one per cent of the electorate took part in the referendum.

"We have gone to the ballot boxes and said 'No, this country is ours'," Sila Calderon, the mayor of the capital San Juan said as the results were declared. "We continue being Puerto Ricans forever. We want to live as Puerto Ricans and die as Puerto Ricans."

Mr Calderon has been a leading campaigner in the effort to keep the island's current status, defending its Spanish language and culture against Americanisation and the imposition of English as its first language.

The vote is a major blow to Puerto Rico's governor, Pedro



A Puerto Rican holds the national flag during a rally held in San Juan on Sunday following the weekend referendum

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERTO SCHMIDT

Rossello, who campaigned strongly for US statehood. However, Mr Rossello claimed the defeat as a victory, arguing that the "none of the above" votes were abstentions.

"Today the people spoke and they said statehood is the future of Puerto Rico," Mr

Rossello said. "In my interpretation this is a victory for statehood." He said he would petition the US Congress to make Puerto Rico a state.

That looks like an uphill task after a majority voted for the current semi-colonial relationship in which Puerto Ri-

cans pay no taxes to Washington while receiving \$10 billion (\$8 billion) a year in aid. The average per capita income on the island is \$8,000 per annum, approximately half that of the poorest US state, Mississippi.

President Bill Clinton had earlier asked Congress to

abide by the result of the poll, but the referendum is unlikely to encourage Washington to make the issue a priority. The Republican Senate leader, Trent Lott, has opposed Puerto Rican statehood.

"If they go to Washington to petition for statehood, they

would be violating the right to vote of the majority," the pro-commonwealth senator Rudolph W. Bax said yesterday.

If Puerto Rico became the 51st state, it would rank 49th in size but with its population of 3.8 million would be enti-

led to six Congress members and two senators.

The District of Columbia is the new front-runner in the race to become the 51st US state. But that is a long shot in a Republican-dominated Congress, given the district's Democratic voting record.

News in brief

Indian bill backs women

THE Indian government introduced controversial legislation yesterday which proposes setting aside for women a third of the seats in parliament and the state legislatures.

Ministers hailed the bill as a victory for democracy, but it drew noisy protests from MPs angry that it did not reserve seats for Muslims and women from disadvantaged communities. — Reuters, New Delhi.

DNA exhibit in Anwar trial

MALAYSIA'S sex and corruption trial of the former deputy

prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, took a sensational turn into the street on the edge of Amsterdam's red-light district late on Sunday night.

In the argument that followed, the cyclist stabbed the 25-year-old driver in the chest. — Agencies, Amsterdam.

Lightning hits earl's home

LIGHTNING struck the luxury South African home of Earl Spencer yesterday setting fire to the house and causing serious damage, local radio said. No one was injured.

Cape Talk radio quoted the earl's spokeswoman as saying the brother of the late Princess of Wales and his four children had escaped unharmed. — Reuters, Cape Town.

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Germans demand Stasi spy files from CIA

Ian Traynor in Bonn

GERMANY and the United States are at loggerheads over what is believed to be the greatest intelligence coup of the last days of the cold war, with Bonn demanding that the CIA returns thousands of East German secret service files spirited out of East Berlin in 1960.

The files, taken from the former East German foreign intelligence service, are said to contain the names of 13,000 Stasi spies. They were bought secretly by the Americans in 1960 and 1961, in the chaotic months before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Bonn has been trying, with increasing frustration, to recover the records. The files were compiled by the Stasi's

foreign espionage service, which was headed by the legendary spy-master Markus Wolf. Much of the material had been hidden outside East Berlin before the wall fell.

CIA agents are said to have offered the East Germans hundreds of thousands of dollars for the papers in an operation codenamed Rosewood.

The German government told Washington last week that it was "unacceptable for the German authorities to have no idea of the scope and nature" of the files' contents.

But in recent years the CIA has allowed German colleagues to see some of the files relevant to trials being held in Germany. The material in the files has also been used as evidence in several US espionage trials, according to a recent re-

port in the Washington Post. But the new German government of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has indicated a more assertive stance with the

More than 1,000 ex-Stasi agents can't be identified without the files

dispatch to Washington earlier this month of Peter Frisch, the head of counter-intelligence. He lobbied for the return of the files "to German ownership and German right of disposal" and met George Tenet, the CIA director.

Bonn has said that it is un-

acceptable to be kept in the dark about — potentially — thousands of former East German agents working in the reunited Germany.

Ernst Uhrlau, a former Hamburg policeman who has been appointed Mr Schröder's intelligence co-ordinator, said that Bonn was being prevented from obtaining an accurate picture of the scale of the problem posed by ex-spies.

The documents, amounting to the complete record of communist East Germany's foreign agents, are also certain to include details of people who worked for the Stasi in the West, including Britain.

It is assumed that Russian intelligence has the information contained in the documents because the KGB would have been informed of the

Stasi's intelligence activities.

The Christian Democratic opposition, which was in power when the CIA acquired the files, has complained that more than 1,000 ex-Stasi agents could not be identified without access to the files.

Last month a group of former East German dissidents wrote to the US embassy warning that lack of access to the documents constituted "a destabilisation of German democracy" because many former spies remained in key positions throughout society.

While former East German spies can no longer be tried after a ruling by Germany's constitutional court two years ago, West Germans who worked for the Stasi — there were an estimated 600 — can be tried for treason.

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Dr. J. J. J. J. J.

Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

MASTERLY government planning to defeat the millennium bug goes from strength to strength. Already, it has recruited hundreds of special programmers when according to its own official estimates thousands are required, while its own task force Action 2000 has now advised us all to hoard food this time next year. No need to panic then, albeit that some of the insurance companies seem not to share the Diary's optimism that all will be well. Gerry Moore writes from Flintshire in Wales to report receiving the annual reminder about house and contents insurance from the Halifax and with it a leaflet entitled: "Insurance — date change and computer viruses policy exclusion". This announces an extra exclusion clause inserted to "cover liability following the failure of equipment to recognise data representing the Year 2000". By the way, the insurance period noted is "1st January 1999 to 1st January 1900". Don't panic, don't panic...

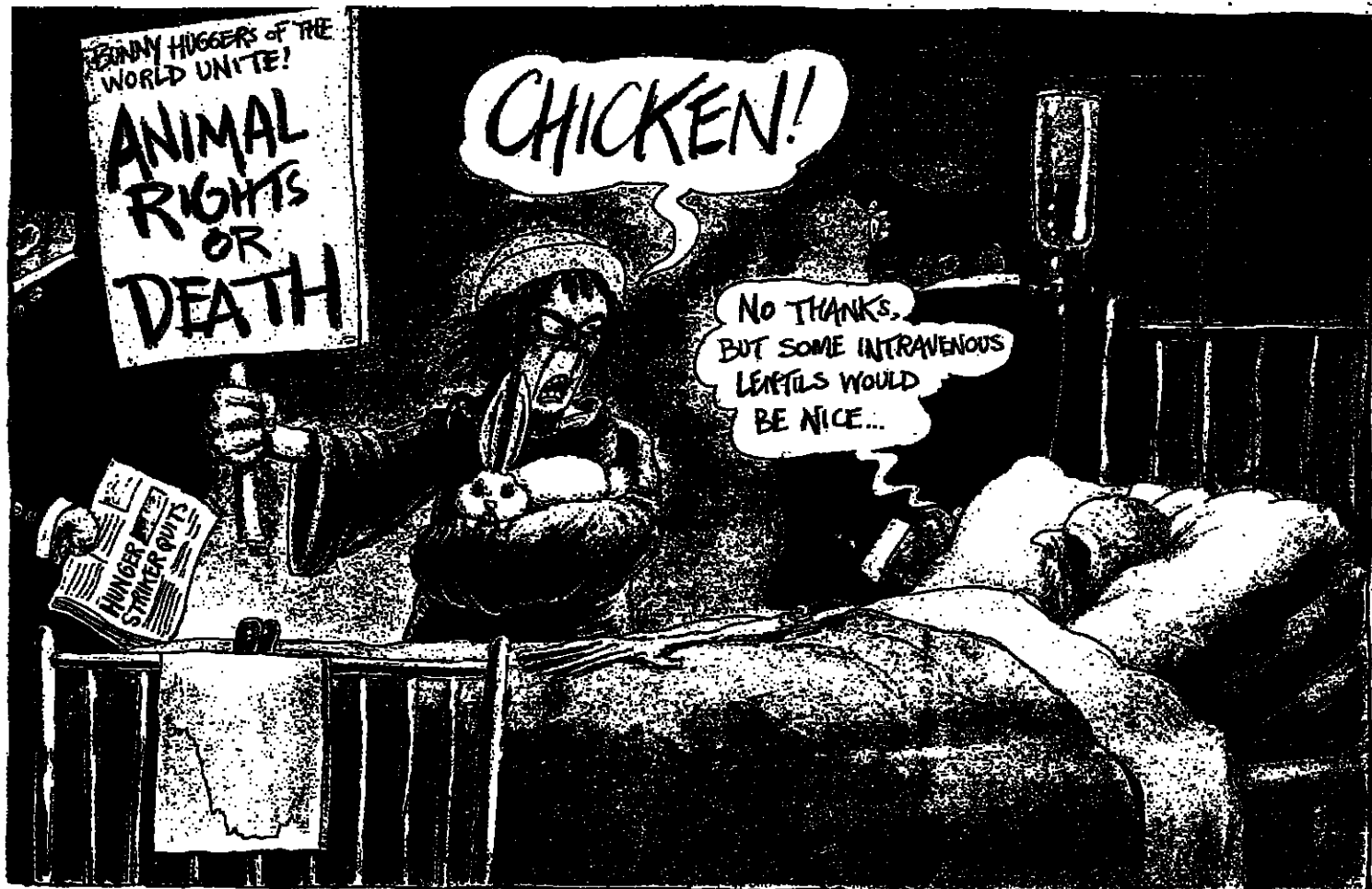
THE embryo of a Jack Straw lecture has been noted. Jack was chatting at a party about his Pinochet decision. It was, he said, not quite as difficult as people imagine. "There were only two options, yes or no," Jack explained, "but no third way". Openly challenging Mr Tony's intellectual brainchild — one widely accepted as the most significant development in political philosophy since Mr Major's Gones Headline — is a clear statement of intent. Watch out, Jack. These are dangerous waters.

MY attention is drawn to an anti-gay rant by an anti-gay rant in the BNP's house bulletin of the BNP. The author is John Tyndall, whose long career in comical far right-wing politics stretches back to a spell leading the National Front. Now a leader of the BNP, Tyndall's polemic, which at times, to his credit, borders on the semi-literate — centres on his revision for homosexuals, most notably those in the Cabinet. In section entitled "homosexuality in the party", there is even a picture of Mandy Mandelson — the one below, in fact, taken in my kitchen the night the Trade Secretary invited himself to dinner — which Spearhead pitifully captions: "Mandy and a close friend".



THE self-effacement of the Jerwood Foundation, which recently failed to bully the Royal Court to which it has donated £3 million into changing its name to the Royal Jerwood, continues to impress. As Pass Notes has reported, we have a Jerwood Award for educational theory, a Jerwood painting prize, a Jerwood Gallery at the Natural History Museum and, not least, the Guardian Jerwood Award for charity workers. So what the world would seem to need most at the moment is more Jerwoods... and the winter newsletter from New Labour's favourite PR firm Hobbs-brown Macaulay has the happy news. There is now, it reports, a Jerwood Library at Trinity Hall, Cambridge; a Jerwood Sculpture Park at Willey Park in Worcester; and — hurray! — something called the Jerwood Space in Southwark. By next week, if the price is right, there will be the Jerwood Guardian Diary too.

IAM pleased to announce that the Christmas card from Demos has arrived. Sadly, this year that well-loved think tank cannot afford the stamps, and the envelope is franked with the message "to pay 40p". Also enclosed, meanwhile, is a change of address card announcing Demos's move to the Haymarket, hardly the cheapest address in central London. Glad to be subsidising such smart new offices.



The folly, negligence and lack of judgment of the brilliant Hoffmann

Hugo Young



THREE weeks ago, the case of General Pinochet propelled the British judiciary to the pinnacle of global admiration. By ruling that the former Chilean dictator enjoyed no immunity in these courts, the law lords struck a massive, possibly-uncharacteristic, certainly unexpected, blow for the primacy of international standards of human rights.

Today this triumph is in peril of disintegrating, with consequences not only for Pinochet and international law, but for the reputation, and even the future potency, of Britain's final court. Through the folly of a single judge, the law lords, from being the heroes, may soon become the villains.

They must decide this matter themselves, which makes their predicament no more comfortable. Five of them convene this morning to hear a petition from Pinochet's lawyers that the earlier judgment was polluted by bias. Lord Hoffmann's wife, it turned out, works for Amnesty International, which was admitted as a party to the Pinochet case, and Lord Hoffmann himself sits on a connected charity.

Lord Hoffmann gave the final vote on November 25 that swung the court 3-2 against the claim to immunity which would have sent Pinochet back to Chile.

On the face of it, this should not matter. If every judge were disbarred for his leisure interests, not to mention his wife's work, the court system would seize up tomorrow. Every law lord has spent a lifetime learning true objectivity. But Lord Hoffmann failed to declare his connection, even when Amnesty was admitted as a party to the case. Convention said he

should have done so; practice suggests that an objection would have been unlikely.

But the appearance of bias, not proof of actual bias, is enough to poison due process: an austere position, but one laid down by the Lords (R v Gough, 1993) and endorsed in the European Court of Human Rights. Hoffmann's negligence exposes the Pinochet court to having its opinion nullified. If that happens, several roads will fall in.

Re-opening the case at all is very dangerous for the Lords. Such a thing has never been done before. It's a measure of the seriousness with which any vestige of bias is regarded that other law lords — there are 12 in all — led by Lord Browne-Wilkinson, the senior, should have decided the five who hear it will be different from the November five. Their task is fraught.

If they judge bias to have been apparent enough, the case will have to be re-heard. But by whom? The previous court, but with Hoffmann replaced? Unlikely. This would reduce the hearing to a battle for the mind of a single judge. If not, what permanent legal status attaches to the opinions of Lords Slynn and Lloyd, who found for Pinochet last month, let alone those of Lords Steyn and Nicholls, who won the day for international law?

A new panel could easily come to the opposite result. Another grotesque confusion. Some observers, looking at the temperamental make-up of the bench Lord Chancellor Irvine is fashioning, would place no bets on another three law lords agreeing with Steyn and Nicholls.

The central point was and is a fine one. Pinochet could hope once again to be on the

plane, and the inconvenient triumph of the judiciary would be replaced by the relief of politicians to be shot of the consequences of Senator Pinochet.

Whatever now happens, these scenarios throw open the absurdity of the House of Lords court. In that sense, the episode is timely. As the Scottish and other devolution structures heave into view, constitutional disputes will come for judgment, but the Government has resisted converting the Lords into a court of final justice, yet the evidence of the mixture of caprice and political bias that is occasionally seen to affect the perming of any five out of the 12 to be assigned to particular cases.

If five different judges decide Pinochet the other way, it would drive home as nothing has before the strangeness of the Lords' claim, on the one hand, to be the fount of final justice, yet the evident fact, on the other, that there's no such thing as a declaration of law free from human foibles.

RESISTING a constitutional court, with a fixed number of judges, the Government invokes the familiar British blur: the wisdom of this age-old middle of multi-hatted Lord Chancellors, the ex-officio credibility of law lords surviving their random selection, the reliable supremacy of judgment over system. Will anyone believe that quite so surely again, whichever way the Pinochet case goes?

The potential shredding of a court's status, and the early destruction of its venture into political courage, may be a heavy burden to lay on Lord Hoffmann. But he does seem to lack judgment. This isn't

the first time he's shown it. A few years ago, he lurked, unwisely, in the corridors of the Scott inquiry. In 1996, he allowed himself to be used as a pawn by the then Lord Chancellor Mackay in the intensely political manipulation of the 1998 Bill of Rights, in order to help Neil Hamilton off the hook.

Every lawyer I know says he is a brilliant man, though hardly the consistent liberal the right-wing press labelled him, when seeking to explain away the November judgment as an aberrant imposition on English law by South African lefties.

Now, having remained silent, except for his vote, on the day of judgment in November, did his Amnesty conviction embarrass him into keeping quiet? — he has placed an unconscionable weight on his brethren to save their court.

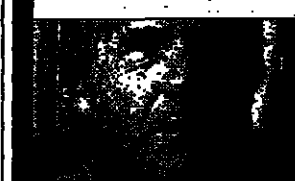
Will they succeed? Lord Browne-Wilkinson, presiding, will be aware of the worst case, but may be hard put to avoid it. Their lordships will not want to prolong the hearing. In the end they have to make a very awkward choice. The least damaging would be to uphold Hoffmann's role, perhaps by finding that his connection with Amnesty, while not very public, was known to lawyers on the other side.

But British law's cultural tradition against even a tincture of bias is profound. There will be voices to assert it. A complete re-hearing would lead to chaos. A tempting alternative might be to subtract Hoffmann from November's 3-2. But that would make nonsense too. A 2-2 split would restore the judgment of the lower court, and see the General back to Chile in short order.

Astonishing new report shows that poverty is a Bad Thing

It makes you sick

Paul Foot



IN 1977, a Labour Health Minister set up an inquiry into health inequalities. The chairman was Sir Douglas Black, just retired as chief scientist at the Department of Health.

After long research, Sir Douglas reported that poor people were much more likely than rich people to get sick. One of the main reasons for this discrepancy, he revealed, was that poor people didn't have enough money.

Sir Douglas complained that the chief victims of this inequality were children. Although many mothers went without food to feed their children, millions of children were, as a direct result of poverty, systematically deprived of the basic essentials for good health.

He recommended as a priority that social security benefits and pensions should be high enough to ensure better health for the poor, and pointed out gently and mainly by implication that the easiest way to pay for it is higher taxes on the rich.

It was bad luck on Sir Douglas that his report wasn't published until 1980. A Tory government had just taken office, resolved to strike out for the high ground of inequality.

The new Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, passionately believed that one of the most serious social problems facing the British people was excessive taxation of the rich. The obvious remedy, she concluded, was to enrich the rich so that some of their increased fortunes could trickle down to the poor. All social policy was bent to this purpose. Welfare benefits were trimmed and pensions cut loose from earnings. Sir Douglas Black's report was an embarrassment. After the usual unctuous expressions of official gratitude, it was consigned to the rubbish bin.

IN 1997, almost exactly 20 years after the Black report was commissioned, a Labour Health Minister set up an inquiry into health inequalities. The chairman was Sir Donald Acheson, just retired as chief medical officer at the Department of Health.

After long research, Sir Donald reports that poor people are much more likely than rich people to get sick. One of the main reasons for this discrepancy, he reveals, is that poor people don't have enough money. He says that the chief victims of this in-

equality are children. Although many mothers go without food to feed their children, millions of children are, as a direct result of poverty, systematically deprived of the basic essentials for good health.

The only real difference between Sir Donald and Sir Douglas is that after 20 years of "trickling down", the health inequalities in Britain are much worse. Sir Donald puts it bluntly. "Average incomes grew in real terms by 40 per cent between 1979 and 1994-95, but this growth was far greater (60-65 per cent) amongst the richest tenth of the population."

"For the poorest tenth, average income increased by only 10 per cent (before housing costs) and fell by eight per cent (after them)."

Sir Donald recommends that social security benefits and pensions should be high enough to ensure better health for the poor, and points out gently and mainly by implication that the easiest way to pay for it is higher taxes on the rich.

It is bad luck for Sir Donald that today's Prime Minister passionately believes that one of the most serious social problems facing the British people is excessive taxation of the rich. The obvious remedy, she concludes, is to enrich the rich so that some of their increased fortunes can trickle down to the poor.

All social policy, it seems, is bent to that purpose. Benefits are slashed and pensions kept firmly divorced from

After 20 years of trickling down, inequalities are even worse

earnings. The usual unctuous expressions of gratitude are ominous. This report is heading the same way as its luckless predecessor.

IN EVERY day, it seems, a first rate journalist is sacked by the BBC. Isabel Hilton was sacked the other day as a World Tonight presenter. She consistently failed to show even a trace of the two qualities most required of BBC interviewers nowadays: deference and ignorance. She had to go.

Last week, Chris Dumley was sacked from his long-standing job of presenting the reaction of BBC listeners. His problem was not just humour and style. Sometimes he even dared to suggest that BBC bosses can be wrong. He had to go.

I nominate James Boyle, Radio 4 Controller as the man who has done more than anyone else in BBC history to drag the BBC into the journalistic gutter.

Sorry, that's not strong enough. Let me put it another way. He's the obvious candidate to succeed John Birt.

Four heads lying by a Grozny roadside showed that the collapse of government is now the biggest threat to human rights

State of anarchy

John Gray

THE four British engineers whose decapitated bodies were recently found by the roadside near Grozny are casualties of a development that extends beyond the frontiers of the lawless republic of Chechnya. The breakdown of states is now a major threat to human rights.

In many places, the modern state has collapsed. In countries as different as Afghanistan, Colombia and Albania, in the Russian Federation and Africa, the prevailing condition is akin to anarchy.

Liberal opinion remains shaped by a political outlook in which repressive states are the chief threat to human rights. Yet the anarchy that follows in the wake of collapsed states can be as great a threat to

liberal values as the oppressive states of the past. The dark history of this century goes a long way towards explaining why the state has been demonised. Neither the Holocaust nor the Gulag could have occurred in the absence of modern state machinery.

Most of those who died by violence in the 20th century were killed by the agents of states. From the First World War onwards, the greatest blood-lettings occurred because of war between states or state-imposed terror. It seems reasonable to conclude that relaxing in the state should be the first priority of anyone who cares about human rights.

Yet that is a view far removed from the realities of the post-cold war world. Today, most wars are not fought by the agents of states. They are waged by irregular armies, tribal or

ethnic militias or political organisations. True, some wars, such as the Gulf War, can be fought only by states. Even so, in many places, the power that once defined the modern state — its monopoly over organised violence — has gone.

Not only do states no longer have that control, in

Free market greed brought about the disaster of modern Russia

much of the world they can no longer enforce peace — or prevent the most serious violations.

Some of the worst of the past decade occurred in circumstances where the state was fracturing or had disintegrated. Ethnic massa-

ces in Bosnia and Rwanda were not the work of powerful centralised states like those in Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia. They were acts of genocidal violence committed by forces over which no state had much leverage.

The attacks on the Chinese minority in Indonesia over the past few months may have been politically encouraged, but they occurred in a context in which law and order had already broken down.

In cases like these, violations of human rights occur not because the state is too powerful, but because it has lost control.

In many parts of the world the weakness of the state has been aggravated by the cult of the free market. Market fundamentalism sees government as the problem and markets as the solution. Animated by this primitive creed, the West

has tried to force the governments of developing countries to dismantle controls over their economies.

The results of such policies can be seen in Russia. For the first time in modern peacetime history, a major European state has

collapsed into anarchy. Perhaps because the problems posed by collapsed states are so daunting, it is hard to break habits of thinking in which the state has been demonised. To be sure, the power of the state still needs curbing, not

only in countries such as China and Iran, but also in Britain.

That is why the Government was right to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into British law — and why this country still needs legislation on freedom of information and privacy.

We need to make governments more accountable to their citizens. Yet the power of the state is not today the principal enemy of human freedom. Without a strong, modern state to protect them, no human rights are safe. The world is littered with collapsed states in which life and liberty count for nothing.

That is the lesson of the four heads found in a sack on a road outside Grozny.

False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism, by Prof John Gray, is published by Granta, £8.99.



John Gray

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Lords' dread challenge

It goes beyond Pinochet

TODAY the Law Lords will face a challenge that must fill them with dread. They will be asked by lawyers for Augusto Pinochet to overturn their own ruling that deemed the former dictator as vulnerable to prosecution as anyone else, since his past service as Chile's head of state afforded him no immunity. The challenge centres on Lord Hoffmann, whose decisive vote kept the Santiago One in Britain: the judge failed to disclose his links to Amnesty International, even though that organisation was a party to the case. That was a bad mistake, one that could end up undoing the Law Lords' wise judgment and allowing the General to evade justice. But as Hugo Young explains on the opposite page, this is also a grave moment for Britain's highest bench — one that invites searching questions about both its composition and its role.

Judges of the seniority of Lord Hoffmann are called upon to make decisions not only of life and liberty, but also of human rights and the constitution. These are profound, and political, questions — yet we know next to nothing about the men (and it is chiefly men) who make them.

The Lord Chancellor, Derry Irvine, recognised this problem yesterday, when he acknowledged that greater public scrutiny of judges will be essential now Britain has absorbed the European Convention of Human Rights into our own law. The judiciary will be called upon to make ever more crucial decisions, often striking down the

actions of elected politicians. In that light, it seems obvious that we should be privy to the political interests of the robed men who will wield such power. The illusion that judges are free of human frailty is outdated despite Lord Irvine's insistence that it is "nonsense" to imagine a judge's background exerting influence on his decisions.

The time for such scrutiny is the day candidates are proposed for the top ranks of our judiciary. At present, this selection happens in the dark, utterly free of democratic sunlight. It is the task of one man, the Lord Chancellor. That's why this newspaper was among the earliest advocates of a judicial appointments commission — made up of prison governors, criminologists and lay people as well as lawyers — where these crucial posts might be filled more openly. Labour was committed to that idea before the election, until it was quietly dropped. Now Lord Irvine hints he may revive it. That would certainly be an improvement on the current system.

But other ideas also press their case. Now that the Government has launched an ambitious programme of constitutional reform, surely it should place its changes to the judiciary in that overall context. So, for example, if we are to have a democratic second chamber, perhaps that body might have a say in choosing our judges? It could install a judicial committee to hold US-style confirmation hearings of nominees to the bench. Such a body would soon have learned of Lord Hoffmann's connections with Amnesty, so placing that information on the public record — thereby preventing claims of undeclared interest like the one to be heard today. More deeply, a second chamber would be a useful step on the way toward the separation of powers — a vital democratic notion, but one which has never taken root in Britain. It would hold the

executive in check but also, through a suitably-armed committee, ensure the judiciary was no longer the sole appointment of the executive. At present, all three branches are fused in the single person of the Lord Chancellor. Which device is chosen is not the main question. The key challenge for the Government is to shed some daylight on our judiciary — and to see its own programme of constitutional change not in pieces but as a connected whole.

The art of policy

Keep the brush strokes light

AS AN artwork it certainly offers scale. There's a note of iconoclasm too, but will Chris Smith's magnum opus rank as a masterpiece? One thing is sure — it's likely to be one of a kind, since culture secretaries are unlikely to get more than one bite at the Arts Council cherry. On first inspection A New Cultural Framework reads as if the artist were enthused by technique. He has attacked the institutional structure of arts funding with a mallet and fashioned something that looks a lot smoother. The extra money secured in the summer's Comprehensive Spending Review doubtless lubricated his chisel. Whether the potters and the poets quite belong in the same financial oven remains to be seen, but the outlines of this redrawing of the various arts quangos looks sensible.

Ditto the creation of a body that will, at least in principle, ask questions about effectiveness of arts spending, although calling it Quest does, in the context, have an ominously dirigiste feel. Here's a dilemma. We live in the midst of a boom in "cultural" outlays, both from the Culture Department's own budget and the National Lottery; in

addition, there is the work of the Department for Education and Employment on school curriculum and attainment, the Department of Trade's policies for industry and the regions and the burgeoning conviction on the part of councils, funded through yet another bit of Whitehall, that culture is good for jobs and local identification. Hard questions need to be asked about volume and quality. What, for example, is going to fill all those Lottery-funded galleries? Mr Smith's statement tiptoes round whether the Government is moving to create something that amounts to a cultural policy.

The reason is clearly that he is too far down the ministerial pecking order to be able to countermand the branders of Britain at Number 10, who are doing cultural policy of a kind, let alone other Cabinet big-hitters. Yet without a policy, that's to say a sense of what public outlays are meant to achieve, the effectiveness of spending can't easily be assessed. But with a policy, what price the necessary freedom of imagination for creators of culture, for writers, painters and the host of specialists recently given new life? Personally, Mr Smith looks an unlikely Gauleiter, but he will still need to take care not to apply silly managerialist categories in an area where, as shown by the recent history of the BBC, imagination may suffer from too heavy-handed an encounter with the number-crunchers.

Goodbye blokes

Girls count the spoils of pop

FANS of the Spice Girls were out in force yesterday to snap up copies of their new single, Goodbye, which looks set to top the charts for Christmas. Yesterday was also beginning to look a bit like goodbye to the

boys, as the latest singles chart gave women singers and girl bands the top five slots for the first time since statistics were collected. This was all the more of an achievement because last week's charts didn't include the Spice Girls (their turn is this week) nor All Saints (who may be one saint short of a choir soon if, as mooted, one of their singers leaves). The Spice Girls can undoubtedly claim some reflected glory for the all-women top five. Since they first challenged the Divine Right of Bloke Bands to dictate pop fashions when Wannabe stormed into the charts in 1996, the Spice Girls haven't looked back, even after losing a Spice of their own the way. They staked their claim for Girl Power and inspired numerous other bands and individuals to follow their lead.

They did. Last week B*witched pushed Cher into second place after her seven-week reign, followed by Billie, Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston, and Honeyz. Cynics will, of course, say that this is just another instance of what Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice claimed last week — that the singles charts these days merely reflect the schemes of record companies' marketing departments. Could there have been an element of collusion among record companies thinking it would be a great wheeze to have the top five occupied by women, just as last month they managed to get the top slots occupied by singers from 20 years ago? Possibly.

It may also be true that it has been a poor year for pop for blokes. But these are just excuses. It is really about the onward march of young women, who now gain considerably better results than boys at GCSE, claim more places in the legal profession and who have almost caught up with men in terms of numbers in employment. On this showing, bloke groups had better wise up before they go the way of 78 rpm records.

Letters to the Editor

Making it up with the Scots

I WAS surprised to find Simon Hoggart drawing such an unlikely conclusion from his account of the news as presented by Radio Scotland (Simon Hoggart's Diary, December 14). His view that if people in Scotland (and even in Canada) don't get their news judgements made for them by someone in Television Centre then "they are likely to feel more out of touch from real events than ever before," is precisely the smug attitude that makes programmes in the first place. Perhaps, in one of Hoggart's familiar phrases, he made that last bit up. Patrick Hannan, Cardiff

NO WONDER the Scots want their own news broadcasts, given the unrelenting mispronunciation of their major city by all the presenters on radio and TV as "Glasgow". Elaine James, London

SO, FOR reasons best known to himself, Barry Horne has ended his hunger strike and now is back in hospital (Animal activist labelled a fraud as he calls off hunger strike, December 14). I wonder what sort of medical treatment he is expecting that would not have been tested on animals? Elaine James, London

"WHAT is Jon Barton up to?" Media Guardian, December 14. Who cares? Only me, I suspect, and then only because your story is wrong. I put in a standard BBC application for the Six O'Clock News editorship two months ago, complete with the paper requested. I've confessed this boringly normal behaviour to everyone who's asked. You didn't, and come up instead with some bizarre fiction about "putting his hat into the ring". I'll get the job I'll recommend to my team that tedious old journalist's trick of checking facts before transmission. Jon Barton, Executive Editor, BBC Daily Current Affairs

NOW THAT the phenomenon of the dribbling tea-pot spout has been scientifically investigated (Letters, December 11 and 14) there must be many men who would like Age Concern or a similar interest group to commission further research into the human variant of this little documented condition. John Clark, Exeter

I AGREE with Bob Line (Letters, December 12) that we should think of a more heavy way for teenagers of "breaking the ice" other than asking for a light. But the real problem anyway is what do you say next, as getting a light on its own does not break the ice. The solution is simple. If you're not a smoker, your opening line should be whatever you would have said next. Timothy Kraemer, London

How I'll remember Monty

DAVID Montgomery (Polishing the Mirror, December 14) is, no doubt, a man of many talents — comic impersonations, tap-dancing and so forth. But neither self-awareness nor a talent for grown-up newspaper writing are among them. A few choice memories stand out. One is the bizarre nature of Montgomery's own thinking about broadcast journalism. He saw no point in most serious news and was constantly wanting stories about Porches, celebrity mugshots and "fashionable people" — a naïve, two-dimensional version of his own. Today, an organ so successful it was able to retire, he simply didn't get it. When we had world-class scoops on the front page — Robert Fisk's stunning reports of the Algerian massacres for instance — he was simply baffled.

Then there was the now-famous farce of his "Mirror Academy of Excellence". When this was announced, I was told that all independent staff, including writers, would be required to report for training as a condition of continuing funding. This would mean, I asked, that people such as Polly

Townsend, Neil Ascherson, Fisk and Suzanne Moore would be taught how to write properly by a Mirror-picked executive? No, just so. We eventually body-swered through that madness and even got some valuable low-grade computer training. The real heroes of the Independent while I was there were the talented staff who worked frantically hard to produce a decent paper while Montgomery sneered at them as Tories, union agitators and drunks. I never found out whether he hated independent readers or staff more. Finally, Montgomery gives the impression that he sacked me for not being a good editor. I didn't have "the temperament to edit". Maybe not, particularly since I'd had to do the ridiculous to work with him. I'm sure I had plenty of faults —

But the reason for my sacking was absolutely clear. After a series of ever more extreme demands for cuts, usually conveyed by a puce, embarrassed and bawling Charlie Wilson, I was told that another 50 jobs would have to go. This would have destroyed the newspaper as a serious outfit. I fought a guerrilla cam-

paign and avoided most redundancies, for many months, while we tried to reattach. Finally, when the board was about to agree to Montgomery's demands for a substantially lower budget, I went to its then chairman, explaining normally that if I was asked to implement another round of firings, I would refuse — and pointing out in clear terms why. As I fully expected, I was summarily dismissed. I haven't done many things I'm proud of on this little green planet, but that was one of them. Now the Independent is safely free of the clutches of one of the most negative, least creative people in our business. If it survived Montgomery, it can survive anything. So no complaints; it was a "learning experience". Well, perhaps only one. He describes me in yesterday's article as "a considerable talent". To be described as talented by Montgomery is grossly offensive and damaging to my reputation. Unless I have a retraction by noon I will put the matter in the hands of my training team of custard-pie operatives. Andrew Marr, Editor of the Independent, 1996-98



Not much change out of the euro

I HAVE always been in favour of the European project with its ideas of increasing co-operation between the countries of Europe. Although I still believe in greater co-operation across European economies, the euro seems bound to fuel increasing nationalism rather than dissipate it. The euro will be constitutionally unstable since there can be no convergence between economies with widely different structures and management practices. Domestic political and economic pressures in the euro block will inevitably cause it to fragment, since no German, Greek or Spanish government will sacrifice its citizens' prosperity to the euro's stability. In addition, I fear that the richer European nations — Germany and Benelux — who will be providing most of the capital for the euro will resent the funding of poorer nations, such as Portugal and Greece. I suspect the price that the Bundesbank and Central Bank will demand for such largesse is real control of such economies to ensure value for money and financial probity. Will the euro experiment be paid for by a sacrifice of political autonomy? The euro seems to be idealism untempered by reality. Jeremy Ross, London

LARRY Elliott (Risky trip to Dollar rivalry, December 14) is wrong to say that "there will be no chance for parlia-

ments to grill the bank's governor, Wim Duisenberg". The governor of the European Central Bank will be grilled at least four times a year by the economic and monetary committee of the European Parliament. Nor is he right to claim that the ECB "is simply required to keep inflation below 2 per cent". Article 105 of the Maastricht treaty obliges it to "support the general economic policies (and the objectives of the Community as laid down in Article 2) — namely a 'harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, a high level of employment and of social protection', and so on. The Maastricht treaty's provisions are far more balanced than the casual reader and Eurosceptics alike would allow. Richard Corbett, MEP for Merseyside West, Liverpool

LARRY Elliott is entitled to his own views about European monetary union. But he hit a new low with his claim that "Helmut Kohl has succeeded by peaceful means where Napoleon and Hitler tried conquest and failed". This is the sort of inaccurate and offensive anti-German nonsense that Nick Ridley got sacked for. Alan Leaman, Corfe Mullen, Dorset

Now it's official: the Queen's palaces are mostly open

FOR most of the year, even when the Queen is in residence, the state apartments are open to visitors (A queen's ransom, December 12). It is unfortunate that Alexander Chancellor's visit to Windsor Castle coincided with state apartment closures. All Windsor Castle publicity material makes it clear that the opening arrangements may be subject to change, including the closure of the state apartments. There have been occasions recently when they have been closed — these were November 17-22, to prepare for a concert marking the 50th birthday of the Prince of Wales, and November 26 to December 5 for the state visit by the President of Germany. The closure of St George's Chapel to visitors every Sunday was a decision taken by the dean and canons, who are responsible for the chapel's administration. Regular Sunday services in St George's Chapel are held for worshippers, and the dean and canons decided it was impracticable to manage visitors as well. Finally, constantly updated information about the opening times of all the Queen's official residences — Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse — is available on the royal web site, at <http://www.royal.gov.uk>. This ensures that visitors are aware of what is available for them to see when they wish to visit one of the official residences. Dickie Arbiter, Assistant press secretary to the Queen, Buckingham Palace

Will you give Mary a bed this Christmas?



At 16, Mary ran away from a life of abuse. Today she is homeless. Could you sleep easy on Christmas Eve knowing she was shivering in a bus shelter? You can help keep Mary, and thousands of vulnerable people like her, safe and warm over Christmas. With £25 from you, Crisis can provide a warm bed, hot meals, clean clothes and someone to talk to at one of our shelters. As the days count down to Christmas, nearly 10,000 homeless people are counting on Crisis. We're counting on you. Our service depends on public donations. So please send your £25 today — in time to help us buy the bedding, food and clothes we need to bring Mary in from the cold.

Homeless fiasco was not ours

WAS most concerned to read David Hencke's article (Council ignored families' plight, December 10) about the ombudsman's report on Clarendon Court Hotel. Your article suggests that it was Westminster City Council which placed homeless families in the hotel. Nothing is further from the truth. The council has not, at any time, housed anyone in the Clarendon Court. All its tenants were either self-placed or put there by other councils or agencies. Westminster is also accused of paying £750,000 in housing benefit. I would entirely agree that the amounts paid were, in many cases, excessive. However, this is not a matter where we have any discretion. Housing benefit is a national benefit which is funded by national govern-

ment. It is something which has to be paid by Westminster City Council, even though the recipients had been placed in the hotel by other London boroughs or other agencies. The article states that I was a member of the environment sub-committee which considered hotel inspections in 1991. The borough council's records clearly show that this is not true. Finally, you indicate that action was taken following concerted activity by several councillors. That is indeed correct. But what you do not say is that I was one of those councillors who led the fight — despite the inadequate legislation that exists to bring about legal action against the hotel owners. Melvyn Caplan, Leader, Westminster City Council

Countdown to Christmas

Yes, I'll keep homeless people warm:
☐ £15 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ £250* other £
I enclose a cheque made payable to Crisis. OR debit my:
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Switch* other
Card no. _____
Last three digits of Switch card no. / / Switch issue no. /
Expiry date / / Signature _____
* Gift of £250 or more is worth almost a third extra to us under Gift Aid
Name (caps) Mr/Ms/Ms _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
OR please call our telephone donation line 0800 038 48 38
Crisis, FREEPOST, Room 145, London E1 1BR
* You do not need to provide information from other sources, please, when you donate.
Crisis
100033

Morris Udall

How the west was cleaned

MORRIS UDALL, who has died at the age of 76, was one of the earliest and most strenuous environmental campaigners in the US Congress. As chairman of the House Interior committee for 15 years, his legislative achievements included stringent controls on mining and nuclear power, protection of eight million acres of federal land as a wilderness area, and a ban on inappropriate development across a huge swathe of Alaska.

More controversial was his success in promoting the massive Central Arizona Project, carrying Colorado River water from California into the heart of his native Arizona. Water supply has been the crucial political issue for the western states since their mass settlement in the 19th century; it led to the Colorado River Compact, the only formal treaty ever concluded between individual states.

Disputes between Arizona and California about the interpretation of the compact have been wound up in the US Supreme Court. After years of litigation the case was decided in favour of Arizona, but Udall's hugely-expensive project to divert some of the water through a mountain tunnel into a network of aqueducts is now mired in bitter local controversy.

Ironically, the high charges needed to meet its construction costs seem likely to fall on Udall's other significant clientele, the local Indian tribes whose living conditions he fought so hard to improve. Udall's concern for the underprivileged did not stem, naturally from his background. His father was chief justice of the court in the pre-war Court and Morris's comfortable upbringing in one of the state's most prominent families remained unaffected by the Depression. He experienced some tougher moments, however, when he joined the US Army Air Corps

as a private at the age of 20. Despite the loss of his right eye in an accident at the age of seven, he distinguished himself sufficiently in the Pacific campaign to emerge as a captain.

His background made his post-war qualification as a lawyer almost inevitable, though he initially seemed reluctant to practise. In spite of his impaired sight Udall spent a brief period as a professional basketball player before opening a joint legal practice with his brother, Stewart. Morris's entry into politics came when Stewart, by then the congressman for the area of Arizona abutting the Mexican border, became President Kennedy's Secretary of the Interior.

The second district, which Morris represented for the next 30 years, is the state's oddball, regularly returning Arizona's lone Democratic legislator. Half the population is Hispanic, and much of its area is desert. Its water scarcity is such that it even contains an inland desalination plant. It is also home to many of Arizona's 120,000 native Americans.

So Udall's immediate focus on Capitol Hill was the protection of the natural and human riches of his own state. His Mormon upbringing also dictated his wider concern for good government. As his political influence broadened, his warmth and charm enabled him to find allies for specific proposals among members of Congress whose general views were far removed from his own Democratic liberalism.

During his career Udall successfully brought in legislation to limit campaign contributions and electoral bribery, to ensure compliance through mandatory public disclosure. He also championed such obscure but important moves as civil service reform and the protection of archaeological resources. His immense good humour



Primary color... Udall campaigning for the presidential nomination in 1976. FRANK MARTIN

masked repeated blows in his personal life. His second wife committed suicide. In 1990, by then a victim of Parkinson's disease, he announced his 15th successive electoral campaign. He told reporters that a local hatdresser had responded to his candidacy with the comment: "We were just laughing about it this morning. When he abandoned presidential ambitions, he backed Senator Edward Kennedy's 1980 effort to unseat Carter.

Udall's illness was diagnosed in 1979 but he was able to continue in Congress for another 12 years. By 1991,

however, it had reached a point where he was obliged to resign. The Congressional Quarterly marked his departure with the comment that "No House Democrat could match Udall's combination of affection and respect among colleagues and sprightly wit". He is survived by his wife, Norma, and six children.

Harold Jackson

Morris Udall, politician, born March 15, 1922; died December 12, 1998

Dante Fascell

The man who said 'No' to Nixon

DANTE FASCELL, one of the US House of Representatives' most liberal and effective foreign affairs experts, has died at the age of 81. In a political career spanning eight presidential elections, he fought hard to sustain a bipartisan approach to foreign policy in the face of such divisive issues as the Vietnam war and the Reagan administration's Iran-Contra scandal. His final period in Congress was as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In his home state of Florida he was a staunch supporter of the civil rights movement and deeply concerned to protect the fragile environment of the Everglades and the Florida Keys, both part of his straggling congressional district. His achievements were recognised last month with the award of America's highest civilian honour, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Fascell was born on Long Island, but his Italian immigrant parents moved to the newly-booming city of Miami when he was eight. They prospered well enough to fund him



Fascell... conciliator

through law school but he had only been in practice for three years when America entered the second world war. His army service, from which he emerged as a captain, was spent in Africa and Italy and it helped him decide on a career in public service. "If American men were going to be sent to war," he said later, "I wanted to know why, and to be part of the process that decides whether they should go."

After demobilisation, Fascell worked briefly as a municipal lawyer before running for the state legislature in 1950. Four years later he had made sufficient political impact to try his luck as the Democratic candidate for Florida's 20th congressional district, covering the large southern portion of the state and stretching down through its offshore islands. He won the seat and continued to represent it for the next 38 years.

The composition of his electorate inevitably determined some of Fascell's political attitudes. Its vast proportion of Cuban exiles required him to pursue a relentlessly anti-Castro line, and the size of the local Jewish community, one of the largest in the country, dictated his unwavering support for Israel.

But his instinct to act as a conciliator on Capitol Hill also allowed him to gain support for more divisive causes. After President Nixon authorised US forces to invade neutral Cambodia in 1970, Fascell brought in the first legislative attempt to undo the vote on the infamous 1964 Tonkin Gulf resolution, which effectively ceded Congress's power to declare war to the White

House. He soon acquired a powerful ally in Senator William Fulbright and Congress voted to rescind the resolution.

Fascell was a strong supporter of extensive foreign aid and a deep believer in the value of international agreement on the control of chemical and biological weapons. His tireless work to improve international human rights eventually led to his appointment as the first chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, established to monitor compliance with the Helsinki Accords.

AS A member of the Foreign Affairs Committee Fascell developed a deep expertise in Latin American affairs and chaired its subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. He was also involved in the oversight of the State Department's operations, campaigning vigorously for the more effective use of America's overseas radio services.

His domestic record — and it was that which really ensured his re-election for 19 successive terms — centred on his remarkable ability to attract federal funds to his district. Port installations, inter-land bridges, university buildings, and umpteen other public facilities all bear his name. To this political talent was added an unremitting concern to end all forms of discrimination and success in securing legislation and funds to protect the local environment.

Fascell's career came to a sad end when the boundaries of the 20th district were so substantially changed that he found himself facing an electorate which barely knew him. A brash young rival challenged for the seat in 1982 and Fascell decided to retire from the fray. He is survived by his wife, Jeanne-Marie, who he married in 1941, and by two of their three children.

Harold Jackson

Dante Fascell, politician, born March 9, 1917; died November 28, 1998

A Country Diary

WILTSHIRE: Eastwards into Wiltshire and up towards Salisbury Plain, the broad expanse of chalky downland is interrupted by the humps of tumuli and occasional wooded heights and hollows. Near Hindon, in one of the hollows, we skirted the perimeter of the elevated woods of Fonthill and found a broad, grassy ride and a roadway that penetrated the wood beside a derelict lodge.

The place was deserted and the atmosphere mysterious. The only moving thing, a solitary fox that ambled across our path, seemed mildly surprised but not at all alarmed by our approach. The way leads on for almost a mile, with occasional trees, until the sense of unreality is increased as it opens into a broad, mown space which surrounds a square, Gothic tower and oratory with three lancet windows. Even today, when natural growth has had time

to reassert itself and obscure the design, this landscape is evidently the result of artifice: ways have been cleared to create vistas, exotic plantings introduced and natural features enhanced to make a fairytale approach to what was once Fonthill Abbey.

Nelson and Emma were here in December 1800. They had been shown the alpine garden, the American plantation, the Norwegian lawn and the encircling 12-foot wall to exclude neighbouring gentry keen on hunting. "I consider we have no right to murder animals for sport," said William Beckford, whose driven and eccentric genius made this landscape to imitate those of Poussin, and finished the west front of his stupendous folly, built in haste on a scale to rival that of Salisbury Cathedral, in the nick of time to astound the admiral and his lady.

JOHN VALLINS

Birthdays

Michael Bogdanov, film and stage director, 60; Prof Stuart Cheekley, psychiatrist, 52; Dave Clark, drummer, 58; Frankie Dettori, jockey, 28; Ida Haendel, violinist, 70; Simon Hodgkinson, rugby player, 38; Kevin Hughes, Labour MP, 46; Don Johnson, actor, 48; Joe Jordan, football manager, 47; Gen Sir Frank Kitson, counter-insurgency expert, 72; Henrietta Knight, racehorse trainer, 52; The Rev Dr Una Kroll, physician, writer, feminist, 73; Oscar Niemeyer, architect, 91; Edna O'Brien, novelist, 62; Brian Rogers, vice-chancellor, University of North London, 49; Austin Savage, hockey international, 57; Commandant Anne Spencer, director, WRNS, 60; Prof Sir John Meurig Thomas, FRS, master, Peterhouse, Cambridge, 68; Prof Maurice Wilkins, Nobel prize-winning biophysicist, 82; Dennis Wise, footballer, 32.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN A REPORT headed, Tribunal jails Croat for new war crime of rape, page 17, December 11, we said that the defendant, Anto Furundzija, was jailed for 10 years. Subsequently we said he received two sentences, of 10 years and eight years, to be served consecutively, thus giving the impression that the total length of his time in prison would be 18 years. We should have said concurrently not consecutively. The total length of his sentence was 10 years.

IN OUR Arts Diary, page 10, December 12, we returned to the Greek philosopher Pliny, Pliny the Elder, and his nephew, Pliny the Younger, were Romans not Greeks. Neither majored in philosophy.

WE GAVE Anthony Sher rather too much to do in *The Winter's Tale*. In our reference to it on page 5, December

12, we said he was appearing as both the king and the joker in the current RSC production at Stratford-upon-Avon. He plays the king, Leontes, and that's enough.

DEAFBLIND UK, the charity featured in yesterday's Christmas appeal article, is a winner of the Guardian Jerwood award. Readers wishing to donate to the charity should ring 0950 199 516 and ask for their donation to be divided among the five Jerwood Award winners.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 5558 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 5997. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

John Addison

Music at the movies

JOHN ADDISON, who has died aged 78, was one of the most English of film composers, and his jaunty, ironic scores accompanied some of the most English of films: His music was heard on the sound track of many Boulting Brothers pictures and the majority of Tony Richardson's.

On the first film for which Addison did the complete score, *Seven Days To Noon* (1950), Roy Boulting, the producer, kept saying, "Now we don't want big Hollywood choirs and Hollywood symphony orchestras." Most of the Addison scores that followed were lightly orchestrated, using unexpected instruments and combinations of solo oboes, played by Louis Gossett Jr, Desmond Davis's *The Girl With Green Eyes* (1963), and Hungarian dance melodies for a train chase and a Spanish dance for a tennis match in *The Seventh-Seven Solution* (1976).

For Richardson's *Tom Jones* (1960), for which Addison won an Oscar, he used a saxophone and an out-of-tune harpsichord, with piano music for the silent movie sequences. Yet the bawdy and joyful score had 18th century mannerisms. "I think Tom Jones is one of my best scores," Addison remarked. "When I wrote it, I didn't realise the impact it would have on Hollywood composers. It didn't have a big pop song or a big theme. It didn't have a tune that you came out humming. It was long after the event that I discovered that the score was considered to have broken new ground."

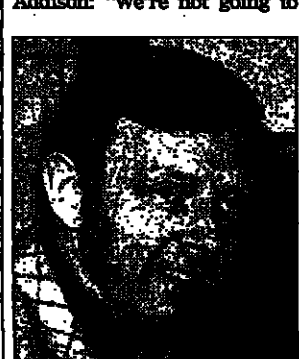
Addison admired Debussy and Ravel for the lightness and clarity of their scoring, as well as Britten and Stravinsky. "Concert music has influenced me more than film music," he claimed.

Despite coming from a non-musical family, Addison started playing the piano at a very early age. However, he was sent to Wellington military school, where his father, John Addison, was a captain. At the age of 15 he was allowed to enter the Royal College of Music, where he studied under Gordon Jacob. His musical career was interrupted by the war, and he volunteered for the Royal Air Force. After six years with the 23rd Hussars, during which time he was wounded at

Caen, he left as a captain. Years later, he relived his experiences of driving a Sherman tank at the battle of Arras when he wrote the music for Richard Attenborough's *A Bridge Too Far* (1977).

It was Roy Boulting, whom Addison had met in the Army, who gave him his first jobs in the movies. This was the dance orchestration in *Brighton Rock* (1947), and the composition of the school song in *The Guinness Pig* (1949). After his early effective score for *Seven Days To Noon*, he wrote the music for Basil Dearden's *Pool of London* (1951), Carol Reed's *The Man Between* (1953) and Alexander Mackendrick's *The Maggie* (1953). This latter score, dominated by a harmonica, attracted the attention of Tony Richardson at the newly-formed English Stage Company at the Royal Court.

As the accent was on realism, Richardson would say to Addison: "We're not going to



Addison... new ground

have any boring violins in this score, are we?" For John Osborne's *The Entertainer*, Addison wrote pastiche music-hall numbers, one of which, *Why Should I Care?*, was sung by Laurence Olivier.

At this time Addison also wrote the music for John Cranko's smart revue *Cranks*, and a ballet, *Carte Blanche*, commissioned by Sadler's Wells, as well as contributing to a number of films, among them *Reach for the Sky* (1956), the story of Douglas Bader, who happened to be Addison's brother-in-law, and the Boulting Brothers' *Private's Progress* (1956) and *Lucky Jim* (1957), the title of which was sung in a mock-madrigal style. In the 1960s, the bulk of his film work was done for Tony Richardson, including *A*

Taste Of Honey (1961), incorporating children's songs, which he discovered in working-class Manchester, where the film was shot.

Because of Addison's success with *Tom Jones*, he was asked to do a number of period pieces, one of them being *The Amorous Adventures Of 1601 Plunderers* (1969). But when Addison saw the rough-cut of the film, he asked his agent how he could get out of it. The agent suggested he asked for too much money. Addison got what he asked for — and stayed.

For his first American film, *A Fine Madness* (1966), starring Sean Connery, Addison wrote a light, airy score, using a harpsichord and a mechanical saw. However, Jack Warner, head of the studio, wanted it re-written because, according to Addison, "the expected to hear a lot of noise on the track if he was paying all those people." In the same year, Addison was called in to supply the music for Alfred Hitchcock's *Turn of Mind*.

After a couple more films, Addison returned to England, where he settled with his wife, Pamela, and four children, in a large Georgian house on a 20-acre estate near Canterbury. Yet, despite his less than happy experiences in America, in the mid-1970s the family decided to move to Los Angeles, where there was more work than in the deteriorating British film industry.

Though Addison's scores remained distinguished, the films were less so. But he did write the signature tune for the popular TV series *Murder She Wrote*, which uses a piano to suggest the crime-writer heroine's typewriter. Although he taught music theory and orchestration at the Royal College of Music, and had a sextet for woodwind and a bassoon concerto performed in the concert hall, the latter given its world premiere by the Hallé Orchestra earlier this year, John Addison never had pretensions to being a "serious" composer. "If you find you're good at something, as I was a film composer, it's stupid to do anything else," he explained.

Ronald Bergan

John Addison, composer, born March 16, 1920; died December 7, 1998

Letters: Tom Manning and Freddie Young

Don Mac Donald writes: I read with interest the obituary (December 10) on the Arctic explorer and naturalist Tom Manning, whose career began when he, in 1930 or thereabouts, left Cambridge "to explore the coast of Norway and the interior of Lapland. This journey, on which he was joined by his schoolfriend Reynolds Bray, ended with Tom in a Russian prison: their route — on foot, cross-country skis and reindeer sledges — had strayed over the Soviet border, where both young men were arrested by villagers armed with pitchforks on suspicion of being spies."

One aspect of this exploratory journey puzzled me. Why on earth did Manning buy charts of the coast and a road map when he went into the "interior" of Lapland? He would then have avoided straying across the border with Russia, which has been marked very clearly on all maps for a very long time — it is also marked very clearly in the terrain, but perhaps the young explorers were not observing very closely.

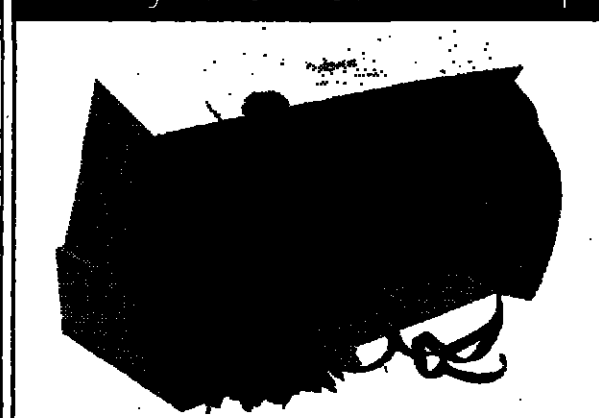
One additional remark. The same people have much the same attitude to being called Lapps as the Inuit have to being called Eskimos, and for much the same reasons. Best to write Sameland rather than Lapland.

Joe McGrath writes: I worked a lot with Freddie Young, the great lighting director, in the 1960s. Because of his words, "the short schedules suit," your obituary (December 9) brought to mind a "happening" at Shepperton film studios that bears telling. I was directing and the client,

stealing a look through the camera at his product, testily observed: "There's a flare there." Freddie, busy with his "gaffer," said to him: "It's not a flare, it's a glint."

"What's the difference between a flare and a glint?" asked the client in a loud voice. "About £5,000 a day," the three-times Oscar winner replied. Freddie's lighting, like Freddie, remained unchanged.

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Tuesday December 15 1998

Barbie romances the Riven masters, page 12

Tomorrow: The £1bn rail sale rip-off

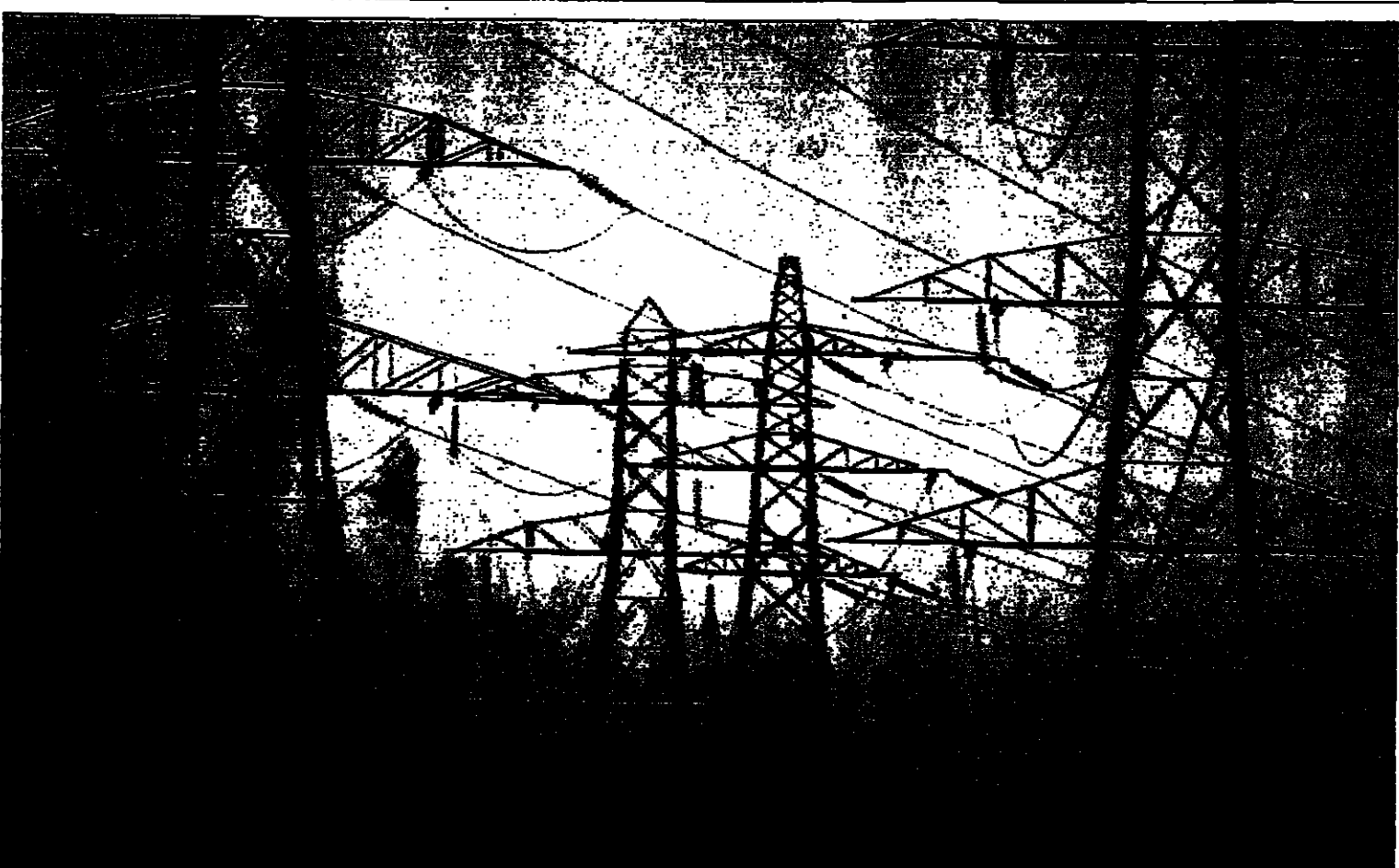
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Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239 9610
Fax: 0171-833 4456

FinanceGuardian

Power firm goes looking for growth in New England

National Grid pylons straddle the South Downs at Southwick Hill, near Shoreham in Sussex. PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAMBER



US bid by National Grid

Terry Macalister
THE invasion of the United States by British energy companies took another leap forward yesterday when National Grid unveiled a \$3.2 billion (£1.9 billion) bid for New England's largest electricity utility, NEES, and said further US takeovers were possible.

National Grid said NEES (New England Electric System) was one of the most efficient transmission and distribution companies. It would give the UK group a toe-hold in the US through New England, a region which has been leading the way in deregulation of the electricity sector.

National Grid believes it can cut costs at NEES, saying it has saved £200 million a year and nearly halved jobs to 3,600 at National Grid. But the City expressed concern about the 25 per cent premium being paid and marked down National Grid shares 11.5p to 487.75p. And ratings agency Moody's Investors Ser-

vice said the company's senior debt was under review for possible downgrade. This all-cash deal will be financed out of existing reserves. It is expected to be finalised inside 12 months with NEES becoming a wholly owned subsidiary of National Grid. The move will greatly increase the book value of National Grid by up to 400 per cent.

But the management said this figure was irrelevant, given that some parts of National Grid's business — such as its 74 per cent stake in the fast-growing Energis telecoms company — were grossly undervalued in the parent company's accounts.

National Grid chief executive David Jones said he was confident the experiences learned in the UK from deregulation could help transform the value of NEES. He said up to £500 million was ready to be spent on further acquisitions if a company "of the right opportunity and size comes into view". He declined to say whether National Grid already had its eye on particular deals.

Notebook Shell faces hazards on alternative route



Alex Brummer

MOST of the oil majors have thus far chosen to deal with the low oil price by forging mergers in the hope of taking out costs and reducing competition. Shell has chosen an alternative route. It is restructuring itself without a merger and the group's chairman John Moody-Stuart deserves credit for taking this route.

The scale of the restructuring, notably the \$4.5 billion (£2.7 billion) special charges on written down assets, may come as a shock. But it is reasonable for Shell to put its balance sheet in order at the same time as it is jettisoning a bureaucratic headquarters structure. The 4,000 job losses announced will be just the start as the company comes to grips with taking out \$2.5 billion of costs a year.

The other area marked for rationalisation is chemicals. Here, Shell is proposing to divest itself of 40 per cent of the business, concentrating on the core activities of major cracker products, petrochemicals and polymers.

buying into a business very like its own: a distribution system over a relatively small land mass area. Moreover, unlike Scottish Power, there are no extravagant claims vis-à-vis the management of the American business. The National Grid regards the NEES incumbent team as satisfactory: the lessons of British companies in the United States is that those which rely on local management tend to do better.

Moreover, this is a purchase which is relatively less complicated. The Grid does have core skills in running an electricity distribution system and NEES does not extend National Grid's reach beyond those skills.

Moreover, in that the New England system is only at the start of deregulation, there may well be all manner of efficiencies which it can bring to bear. The environmental and political outlook on the East Coast is likely to be more friendly to the National Grid than the more independently minded Western states.

As for the opportunities, they may not just be in power lines. The National Grid's unassuming success has been its skill in using its power distribution as a backbone for the British telecoms network. If the Grid can survive the slings and arrows of the regulatory process and the scrutiny of shareholders, then there may yet be some unexpected value.

CBI calls for rate cut as prices fall breaks record

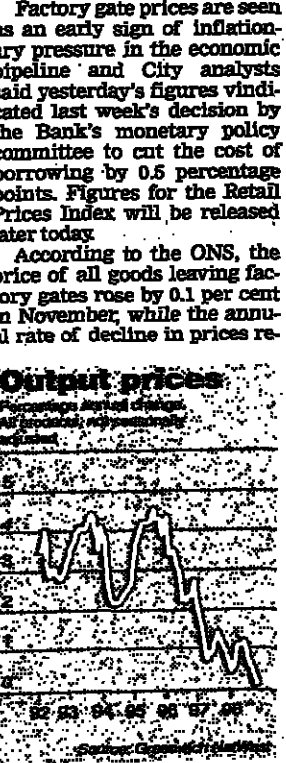
**Larry Elliott
Economics Editor**
THE Confederation of British Industry last night called for further cuts in interest rates after the latest official figures showed hard-pressed firms cutting prices at the fastest rate on record in an effort to drum up new business.

Data from the Office for National Statistics showed that deflationary pressures are intensifying in manufacturing despite the recent easing of monetary policy by the Bank of England.

Factory gate prices excluding food, drink, tobacco and petroleum — which are distorted by Budget tax changes — fell by 0.5 per cent in the year to November, the fastest rate of decline since records began in 1958.

The core measure of output price inflation has now been falling for three months, reflecting the squeeze on industry's profit margins from the downturn in demand.

Kate Barker, the CBI's chief economist, said: "These figures illustrate the need for further cuts in interest rates in the New Year."



Factory gate prices are seen as an early sign of inflationary pressure in the economic pipeline and City analysts said yesterday's figures vindicated last week's decision by the Bank's monetary policy committee to cut the cost of borrowing by 0.5 percentage points. Figures for the Retail Prices Index will be released later today.

According to the ONS, the price of all goods leaving factory gates rose by 0.1 per cent in November, while the annual rate of decline in prices remained unchanged at 0.2 per cent.

Excluding food, drink, tobacco and petroleum products, prices fell by 0.1 per cent last month, the fifth consecutive month in which they have either dropped or remained unchanged.

Rob Hayward, economist at the Bank of America said of the data: "It does suggest that this lack of inflationary pressure will be feeding through to other sectors of the economy, most notably the retail sector."

While prices have been falling across the board in manufacturing, the sharpest falls have been in office machinery and computers, which are down 21.3 per cent on a year ago.

Industry is getting some help from the sharp decline in the cost of fuel and raw materials, which were 8.9 per cent lower in November than in the same month last year.

However, the recent fall in the value of the pound has started to have an impact on the cost of imported goods, and prices have risen by 0.4 per cent in November alone. This is the first increase since May.

Rover stalls over delivery date for flagship 75 model



Customers may have to wait longer for Rover's new 75

Terry Macalister
ROVER plans to put its new 75 model car on sale in March but admitted last night that it could not be sure when customers would receive their vehicles. New deliveries could be as late as July due to quality-control issues, warned the company which is heading for a £800 million loss this year.

With the industry facing as much as a 4 per cent slump in sales in 1998 and competition more intense than ever, the difficulties at the Cowley plant in Oxford where 5850 million is being invested in the Rover 75, are a blow for the car manufacturer owned by BMW of Germany.

But Rover said its inability to provide a definite delivery date for its new model highlighted the exacting checks being undertaken.

"We will only deliver cars when we are 110 per cent sure about the quality," said the spokesman.

More than 74,000 inquiries have been made by potential customers and they will be able to buy the cars formally in March after an official launch, said Rover. But the spokesman added: "Deliveries could be in April or May. They could be in July. It depends on just how quickly we get through the quality test stages."

The 75 is to be Rover's top-of-the-range flagship car which will cost around £19,000 and effectively replace both the 600 and the 800 series. It was launched amid much razzamatazz at the Birmingham Motor Show in October. The car, retro-styled to echo the famous Mark 2 of the 1960s, is meant to challenge vehicles such as the BMW 5 series.

The car is being built at a new £300 million facility at Cowley and at peak production more than 120,000 vehicles will be produced. Some 40 per cent of sales are expected to be from the domestic market.

Meanwhile Longbridge is being prepared for the launch of a new Mini and two mid-

Banks the 'worst offenders for late paying'

Liz Stuart
HIGH street banks, which promote themselves as the champions of enterprise, are strangling small business by paying their suppliers' bills late, it was claimed yesterday.

The large banks, most of which have dedicated small business units, emerged as the worst offenders in a survey on bill payment, taking an average of 82 days to settle liabilities — against the average of all businesses of 58 days and 16 days longer than six months ago when the study of 212,000 companies was last conducted.

Last night the British Bankers' Association hit back, claiming that the data was flawed. A spokesman said that high street banks were at the vanguard of payment practice reform and that they would want to support rather than supplant their small business customers. "The banks have to record payment records in their audited reports and accounts. Looking at these we would put the average payment period at between 15 and 28 days," he said.

A spokesman for Experian, the information technology company which produced the report, insisted that the data was compiled from the suppliers' sales ledgers. "Late payment is having a devastating effect on smaller companies which are falling at a faster rate than at any time in the last three years."

"It is no coincidence that company failures are on the increase again and that one of the major causes is poor cash flow because of the late payment of invoices. As they allow their customers a credit period of 30 days on average, this means that they are in effect using suppliers as unofficial banks to fund over a month's free credit," he said.

According to the Federation of Small Businesses, 18 per cent of failures last year were caused by late payment of invoices and at any time £17 billion is owed by large companies to smaller suppliers.

Goldman swings

THIS has been an extraordinary year for investment bankers Goldman Sachs. The on-off \$20 billion flotation made it the centre of attention for most of the summer until the global financial crisis, the problems at Long-Term Capital Management and the slump in investment banking shares on Wall Street put paid to that ambition.

Some of this is reflected in the company's final quarter, when profits plummeted to \$107 million. The main factors were the turmoil on financial markets which affected credit and arbitrage activities, although corporate finance held up well. There is some satisfaction being drawn at Goldman's that, despite the problems in the markets, the company was in the black in the final quarter (the broad equivalent of the third quarter in other investment banks).

Despite this, Goldman's still managed to earn \$2.92 billion over the whole of 1998, down on the \$3 billion in 1997, but still the second best outcome in the firm's history. Given this level of profitability, even in a year when many others have struggled, it is puzzling why the Goldman partners should have even considered the possibility of having shareholders looking over their shoulders.

As matters stand, profits can swing with the markets and the partners are responsible to no one but themselves.

Grid gains

NOW the herd is thundering in the opposite direction. After the contentious Scottish Power bid for PacificCorp, the National Grid has set its sights on the New England electricity distributor NEES. With all this going on, can PowerGen, which has expressed an interest in the deregulated US market, be far behind?

Once again a bid — the Grid offer for NEES — has been heralded by some as rather unfortunate leakage of privileged information. The Stock Exchange has been successful in preventing the leakage of information from analysts' briefings, but still has a serious problem on its hands with bid information. Almost all the recent major deals, including the Scottish Power offer for PacificCorp, have been preceded by sharp movements in share prices.

It would, however, be unfair to judge the National Grid offer for NEES as harshly as Scottish Power's venture. There are a number of important differences. The Grid is

A Euro flap greets the euro-stork

Stephen Bates in Brussels
NO JOES about inflation please. The euro may be just over a fortnight away from being launched, but yesterday in Brussels the European Commission was able to announce that it will also be airborne and has already been cleared for take-off.

Just under 3,000 blue balloons illuminated the golden-crossed "e" symbol of the euro will be launched from a meeting of the EU's 15 finance ministers at about 1.30 pm European Central Time on December 31.

That is the maximum number allowed before Brussels air traffic control at the nearby Zaventem international airport has to be alerted about the risk of low-flying hazards — launching the single currency with pilots weaving jumbo jets through a haze heavy with symbolic "e"s.

The commission's urbane and normally unflappable spokesman on the euro, a British former Treasury official named Patrick Child, appeared taken by surprise at interest in the balloons rather than the money yesterday.

Was it a symbol that the currency would blow away, asked one Eurosceptic British journalist?

Another correspondent discovered a sudden interest in ornithology to ask whether the balloons would choke local birds or form a danger to passing citizens in the self-styled capital of Europe.

Was the Environment Commissioner, Ritt Bjerregaard from Denmark aware that what was being planned?

"I will have to check about the birds. I am not aware that Madame Bjerregaard has been consulted," said a flustered Mr Child.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS			
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Finland			USA

Supplied by Reuters (including rates, shares and markets)

Tarmac merger fails amid growing industry fears

Terry Macalister
MERGER talks between Tarmac and Aggregate Industries to create the country's largest building materials and quarry company were called off last night amid recriminations as industry experts predicted that the sector is heading for a tough new year.

The development is a blow for Tarmac whose chief executive, Sir Neville Stammers, has been under pressure from investors angry at the company's dismal share price performance.

The news of the breakdown came in a terse statement from Aggregate Industries which was released after the stock market had closed. It said it had

ended talks on what would have been a £1.9 billion deal, adding that the board "will continue to pursue opportunities" to rationalise where value could be created for its shareholders.

But Tarmac's chairman, Sir John Banham, later blamed Aggregate Industries for making unreasonable demands in the talks which started in October and which promised to bring consolidation to an already hard-pressed building materials industry.

Sir John said: "At the eleventh hour the board of Aggregate Industries sought to change key terms in the proposal which they had already agreed. The changes would have effectively resulted in a nil premium takeover of Tarmac

by Aggregate Industries and we could not be satisfied that the potential synergies would have been realised."

Tarmac insiders made clear last night that the company would immediately launch an initiative to find partners who would be willing to look at a tie-up. Among the companies linked in the past with Tarmac is an Irish building materials group, CRH.

The National Council of Building Materials Producers said yesterday that the construction industry faced a difficult couple of years as slower British economic growth held back private sector work. Industrial work would be hit by manufacturing recession and reduced inward investment.

Oil major to cut jobs and sell refineries in worldwide restructuring offensive

Shell blueprint for 2001

Dan Atkinson

ENERGY company Shell, reeling from the sliding oil price and criticisms of its management, unveiled plans to slash more jobs, write off billions of dollars of assets and put chemical businesses and refineries up for sale.

The blueprint for reshaping Shell for the 21st century was generally welcomed, although pessimists suggested the day of the huge integrated oil combine may be drawing to a close, whatever Shell does.

The group pledged itself to

tear out \$2.5 billion in costs in both 1999 and 2000, but no figure has been given for the number of jobs likely to be axed. Already Shell is to cut 4,000 from its worldwide workforce of 105,000, with another 900 going at associated companies and 6,500 people being transferred out as businesses are sold.

The shake-up came on the heels of further disarray within the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the cartel that tries to prop up oil prices. At a meeting of Persian Gulf oil exporters in Cairo on Saturday, Libya proposed an emergency freeze on all Opec exports.

The suggestion was slapped down, although Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and non-Opec member Mexico are to hold a three-way summit in Madrid within the next few days to discuss ways of stemming the world oil glut.

Shell forecast an average \$14-a-barrel price for Brent crude, the benchmark North Sea price, during the next five years, adding that the immediate outlook was for prices nearer \$10.

Even at these levels, said chairman Mark Moody-Stuart, Shell would remain "financially robust".

The Anglo-Dutch group pledged further streamlining

of its management structure, away from traditional committee-based decision-making towards a system based on American-style chief executives.

In a two-and-a-half hour presentation to the City, Shell bosses were said to be contrite about their mistakes. Mr Moody-Stuart said: "I am absolutely clear that our group's reputation with investors is on the line."

He added that the changes marked just the first step in a "radical restructuring" of Shell.

But one analyst suggested Shell and other oil combines ought to be looking at de-

structuring, arguing that it no longer made sense for drilling, refining, transporting and retailing of oil products to be under one roof.

Shell did say nothing was sacred in the drive to improve performance, but a break-up is not in the offing.

Asset write-offs totalling \$4.5 billion after tax will include \$1.6 to \$2 billion in write-offs of exploration and production properties, \$0.5 to \$0.7 billion written off the value of US gas and power interest Texas, acquired last year, and a write-down of \$1.1 to \$1.3 billion on its chemical interests.

Shell is to sell 40 per cent of

its chemicals businesses, including a number of British chemicals plants, as prices for chemicals fall around the world.

A spokeswoman confirmed: "There will be some rationalisation in the UK and some selective divestments but we hope staff will transfer with these businesses." She added: "We are not looking at massive redundancies."

There is some doubt as to whether Shell will find eager buyers for those chemicals businesses and refineries it is keen to sell. In the current climate, said one analyst, there are many sellers of such assets and few buyers.

Retailers face Net invasion

Chris Barrie, Media Business Correspondent

UNLESS British retailers set up strong, well-promoted web sites and e-commerce operations within the next 12 months, they will be "swamped" by US corporations planning on-line operations to sell products around the world. The warning came from the chief strategist of one of the fastest growing Internet businesses in the United States, which has been behind the American counterparts in developing electronic commerce.

Joe Firmage, founder of US Web, said British businesses were "apathetic" about the threats and opportunities of the Internet. American businesses already carries out electronically at least 20 times more business by volume than its British counterparts, he said.

By leveraging their on-line experience in their home markets, US corporations are planning assaults on overseas markets. Amazon.com is already doing in book retailing.

British retailers stood to lose so much business that it could undermine the stability of trade relations between the two nations, Mr Firmage forecast.

A former Novell executive, Mr Firmage founded US Web in 1995. The corporation now claims to be the largest Internet consultancy in the world, employing more than 2,000 people in five countries. It claims more than half the American Fortune 100 companies as clients, and has spent \$700 million (\$420 million) on acquisitions in the past two years.

The influx by American corporations into the British retail market would be so invasive that it would make the current downturn in retail

sales seem small beer. He said that "huge" retail businesses operating purely on-line were being constructed in the US, yet Britain had yet to win any meaningful share of this fast-growing market.

"Some 95 per cent of major US corporations are making efforts to build intranets, and nearly all have extensive web sites. It is important to recognise that the Internet will be as important to business as the telephone," he said.

Estimating the United States to hold 75 per cent of the world's Internet transactions, Mr Firmage forecast that business conducted on-line around the world would rise three fold next year from this year's estimate of \$2.5 billion. Mr Firmage refused to say which British retailers were especially slow to respond to the threat of on-line business based in the US, but he made it clear that companies selling books, records and videos were prime targets.

Mark Fowle, managing director of US Web's British operation, said the on-line book retailer Amazon.com presented a grave threat to the future of more conventional retailers such as WH Smith, despite the fact that the British company has an on-line book-selling business. "Christmas in the US is Christmas on-line," Mr Fowle said. He is issuing a "wake-up" call to British retailers who will face fierce competition from the US by Christmas 1999.

Mr Firmage's predictions brought a sharp rebuttal from Ross Beadle, marketing director of the Internet Bookshop, which was bought by WH Smith to form the core of the high street retailer's on-line operation, however.

He said the big brands built on the Internet were so far Web-only brands on both sides of the Atlantic. His bookshop has increased sales four-fold in the past year.

Doll maker bids for computer market



Barbie needs hi-tech business partner, says toy group Mattel

Mark Tran in New York

THE world's largest toy maker yesterday moved into the world of hi-tech games with a \$3.8 billion (\$2.2 billion) bid for the Learning Company.

Mattel, most famous for its Barbie doll, will become the owner of the second-largest consumer software group in the world if the deal is approved by shareholders.

Popular for games such as Riven and Myst, the Learning Company has \$950 million in projected revenues for 1998, making it second only to Microsoft in consumer software. Its brands include Reader Rabbit and the Oregon Trail.

Although Barbie contin-

ues to be a cash cow for Mattel, the Californian toy company does not want to be left out of the interactive toy market as children move much more quickly from dolls and action figures to electronics.

"We have begun the process of transforming Mattel from a toy company to a global children's products company," said Jill Barad, Mattel's chairman and chief executive officer.

As a result of this merger we will achieve our goal of building a \$1 billion interactive software business."

Mattel already has seen some success with its interactive Winnie-the-Pooh as part of its attempts at diversification.

Earlier this year, Mattel bought the Pleasant Company, maker of the

popular line of American Girl dolls, books and clothes sold through direct mail rather than traditional retailers like Toys R Us.

"The combination of American Girl, the Learning Company and our collector businesses will give us more than \$900 million in direct-to-consumer sales, lessening our dependence on traditional retailers," Ms Barad said.

On a less festive note, Mattel disclosed that it will see a \$500 million drop in revenue in 1998 because of a change in buying practices from many of its retail customers.

Many merchants are letting inventory levels run down rather than reordering merchandise to plug gaps in keeping with the practice of "just in time"

inventory management. Mattel expects a 33 per cent drop in profits compared with previous estimates.

"These developments were counter to all historical trends and could not have been foreseen. Our sales were on plan through mid-November and we had a strong Thanksgiving retail," said Ms Barad. "This situation is very painful and disappointing for us."

This year has been a tough year for Mattel, one of corporate America's biggest success stories in the past decade, with a share price that has jumped four-fold since 1994. Mattel's growth has also made a celebrity of Ms Barad, one of the top women executives in America.



Eyeing expansion... Barbie Doll manufacturer Mattel wants to add the software game products of the Learning Company to become a global children's products company
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILITOE

Vaux profit hit as it calls time

Roger Cowe

NORTH-east brewer and hotelier Vaux yesterday prepared for its imminent departure from the beer industry with a \$25 million write-off that slashed profits by more than half last year to \$14 million.

The charge reflects the estimated reduction in value of the properties to be sold, compared to their value in the balance sheet last year.

Martin Grant, chief executive, said he was close to completing negotiations to sell the two breweries in Sunderland and Sheffield, and a 350-strong chain of tenanted pubs. The deal should be finalised in January, after which the company will change its name to the Swallow Group, reflecting its concentration on the Swallow Hotel chain.

Mr Grant said escaping from brewing would benefit the continuing pub and hotel chains because they would be able to buy beer more cheaply on the open market, while some of the cash generated from the sale would be invested and the rest would help reduce debts.

The 36 Swallow Hotels reported a strong trading year. Profits rose by more than 11 per cent on a comparable basis, with higher occupancy levels and a 12 per cent increase in room rates.

Total beer sales edged up, helped by the new brands, Lambton's and Samson. But sales in tenanted pubs continued to fall.

Brewing profits fell by 12 per cent while profits from the managed houses edged ahead of last year.

Mr Grant reported gloomier news on current sales, however, describing the trading as "volatile and difficult to predict". Takings in managed pubs are 8 per cent below this time last year and hotel occupancy rates have also slipped.

Vaux said there was "an overall softening in demand" but reported forward hotel bookings still ahead of last year.

Mr Grant described the trading environment as "challenging" but said there were several ways in which the financial performance of the hotel chain and the managed pubs could be improved even in tough times.

De Beers relies on US yen for gems

Dan Atkinson

PLUNGING Far Eastern jewellery demand has wiped nearly a third off world gemstone sales, the De Beers group said yesterday. Turmoil in Japan and South-east Asia has shrunk the global market by about 15 per cent since 1996.

Now all eyes are on the United States, whose booming economy is staggering under record levels of debt. An American crash would leave the diamond industry in disarray and remove the last buoyant jewellery market.

De Beers was reporting 1998 sales by its Central Selling Organisation (CSO), the cartel in Hatton Garden, London, that markets nearly 90 per cent of

the world's diamonds, including those extracted in De Beers's mines. Total sales of rough diamonds through the CSO dived 28 per cent from 1997 to \$3.4 billion in 1998.

However, the De Beers diamond stockpile — the buffer stock maintained by De Beers to keep diamonds off the market in bad times and sell them when conditions improve — is thought to have ballooned to about \$5 billion-worth of stones, against \$4.7 billion-worth at the end of June.

But even the stockpile and the falling sales do not tell the full story of sliding diamond demand, because mines are keeping stones off the market.

At the heart of the crisis is the meltdown in the Far East: in 1996, Japan and South-east

Asia accounted for about 40 per cent of all jewellery sales, with the US taking another 40 per cent and Europe and the rest of the world 20 per cent. Now the US takes about 45 per cent, Europe and the rest of the world 20 per cent and the Far East 20 per cent, leaving a 15 per cent hole in demand.

Roger Chaplin, analyst at London broker T. Hoare, said any slowdown in the US would pose severe problems for De Beers. De Beers had massaged down expectations for the second half of 1998 from CSO sales totalling \$1.9 billion to something closer to the \$1.645 billion announced yesterday.

For De Beers shareholders, a dividend cut now looms for the first time since 1992. Then,

the CSO's problems were on the supply side, with Angolan and Russian diamonds glutting the market. Today it is demand squeezing the industry.

The company said: "Good levels of retail sales of diamond jewellery in the United States and to a lesser extent in Europe have been insufficient to compensate for lower sales in Japan and East Asia." It added that sales of diamond jewellery in the US held up well and early indications suggested strong demand in the Christmas sales period.

But retail demand in Japan, the second largest market, was some 20 per cent below 1997 in dollar terms, while polished stone imports into Hong Kong were down around 40 per cent.

No cash for bus lane, says BAA

Keith Harper Transport Editor

THE Government's hopes of attracting private enterprise to help fund a dedicated bus lane on the M25 between Heathrow and Gatwick airports were dashed yesterday by BAA, the airports operator.

The BAA said it did not have the capital to put into the \$100 million scheme. It had been devised to relieve congestion on the M25 rather than to provide easier access for passengers travelling between the two airports.

The BAA said rail access to Gatwick from central London was excellent and the journey would eventually be reduced to less than 30 minutes.

The company has been in talks with Railtrack for the past two years to buy Gatwick railway station, which is in need of renovation, but the talks have collapsed because Railtrack realises the commercial potential from redeveloping the station.

BAA also stressed it had no plan to bid for the new franchise for the Gatwick Express, held by National Express. BAA has already entered the train operating market. It operates and paid for the development of the \$450 million Heathrow Express between Paddington and the centre of

the airport, and is interested in extending its empire in this field.

BAA's revelations make it unlikely that the widening of the M25 will take place for several years. It is in the Government's road plans, but is not scheduled for at least three years.

The Government would not be prepared to proceed with a bus lane without carrying out further improvements to the M25. The lane is scheduled to run along the busy 25-mile stretch of the motorway between junctions 12 and 15.

The BAA has so far spent \$1 million on a special bus lane on the M4 spur approach to Heathrow. The Highways Agency is examining plans to build a bus lane on the east-bound M4 from Heathrow towards central London.

Traffic at BAA's seven airports increased by 7.1 per cent in November last year, including exceptional gains of 34.2 per cent at Stansted, Britain's fastest growing airport.

The company said that UK passengers in November totalled 8.1 million, with the important European scheduled market increasing by 7.4 per cent.

Heathrow recorded a growth of 3.4 per cent, while Gatwick and Edinburgh's traffic rose by 10.1 per cent.

News in brief

Goldman hit by financial turmoil

TURMOIL in the financial markets in the last quarter of the year inflicted pain on Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank which yesterday reported pre-tax profits of just \$107 million (\$87 million) for the period, one of its worst quarters ever.

However, Goldman's results for the whole of 1998 were its second best on report thanks to buoyant financial markets earlier in the year. In the financial year to November, Goldman made profits of \$2,921 billion, down from the \$3.01 billion record in 1997.

The results are the culmination of a year in which Goldman's reputation was battered by its humiliating decision to pull its plans for stock market flotation. — *Jill Trevor*

Vert is the new black

JACQUES VERT, the ladieswear retailer, bucked the grim trend of autumn sales with strong half-year sales yesterday. The company, which was restructured earlier in the year, saw sales from its 22 stores and 91 in-store concessions rise by nine per cent in the six-month period, and sales have soared by 13 per cent in the last five weeks. But chairman Bill Reid said "cash requirements will remain tight at certain times of the cycle". The company turned last year's £2.5 million loss in to a £284,000 profit.

E-mails R Us

TOYS R US yesterday entered the battle for Internet customers with a free offer to rival special deals available from Dillons and Tesco. The toy chain said it would give customers free registration and subscription, five free e-mail addresses and other add-ons, even if they are not buying a new personal computer from the toy chain. The offer is available from its 61 multi-media departments to customers who already have a PC and to new buyers. Toys R Us has been selling PCs for three years and currently offers the simplest version for £399. The deal is in conjunction with Martin Dawes Telecommunications, which runs the BreezeNet service. Cable & Wireless and ICL are also

society

Every Wednesday in the

The Guardian

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Olympic Games

Duncan Mackay on the IOC president's promise of investigation as Salt Lake City apologises for inducements

Samaranch to act over bribes

IN A display of unexpected unity, the International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch yesterday appeared alongside the senior official who has set in train the biggest corruption scandal in the modern Games' 100-year history.

Samaranch sat grim faced at a press conference in Lausanne as the 80-year-old Swiss lawyer Marc Hodler, the long-serving member of the IOC with 35 years and a part of its powerful ruling executive board, repeated his vote-buying charges.

Looking tired and drawn, Hodler, who is due to step down from the IOC shortly, said: "These have been the three worst days I have spent in my long career in sport."

Samaranch, who has led the IOC since 1980 when among the candidates he defeated was Hodler, compared the crisis to the boycotts of the 1980s and the Ben Johnson drug scandal at the 1988 Seoul Games. "They were difficult moments, and now we are facing another difficult moment," he said. "I am sure we will solve this problem."

The IOC president said the investigation would centre on Salt Lake City because it is the only case with documented evidence. "If there is other proof, we will open other cases," he said. "If there are cases of corruption, we can't permit it in the Olympic family."

Hodler shook the Olympic movement to its core when he alleged that four "agents", including one IOC member, had been involved in vote-buying over the past 10 years. He cited supposed irregularities in the elections of at least four Olympic cities — Atlanta, Nagano, Sydney and Salt Lake City.

He repeated his defence of the Salt Lake City scholarship programme, which he said was the only case with documented evidence. "If there is other proof, we will open other cases," he said. "If there are cases of corruption, we can't permit it in the Olympic family."



Whistleblower... the 80-year-old Swiss lawyer Marc Hodler leaves the IOC headquarters in Lausanne yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: FABRICE COFFRIN

embarrassment caused. Hodler, however, claimed the city had been blackmailed during their bid to stage the 2002 Winter Games. The Salt Lake committee operated a fund that provided nearly \$400,000 in aid to 13 people, including six relatives of IOC members.

"For us, Salt Lake City was a victim of blackmail and not a villain," Hodler said. "The real villains are the agents who put the cities in awkward positions using blackmail."

Hodler said the "most detestable agent" has approached bid cities claiming "never in the past 15 years has a city won the Games without his help". He said other agents promise to secure IOC votes for free, while demanding \$8 million if the city wins the bid.

The Swiss is in charge of the IOC ethics committee which draws up the rules on bidding. Critics have long argued there should be sanctions against IOC members who accept the inducements offered to them by bidding cities.

Hodler said he decided to go public after a senior government official asked him about rumours of misconduct and wondered whether Hodler had been bribed to keep quiet.

Until now, there has only been a written proof of bribery that would not stand up as evidence in court, Hodler said. He admitted he had heard complaints from previous unsuccessful Olympic bidders, including Manchester and Stockholm. "But now we have written proof of corruption practices in the case of the Salt Lake fund," he said.

Samaranch claimed the scandal could help the IOC clean up its act. "After the black day, the sun will come again," he said. "If we have to clean things up, we will. If it is necessary, we will expel members. After the IOC will be even stronger than before."

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Racing

King George losing out to Ericsson

Chris Hawkes

KEMPTON Park's Boxing Day feature, the King George VI Chase, is in danger of being overshadowed by the Ericsson Chase at Leopardstown on December 28, a race in which Florida Pearl, the ante-post favourite with Hill's for the Cheltenham Gold Cup, is due to make his reappearance.

Joining him will be Sunny Bay, apparently unsuited by Kempton's right-hand track. Dorans Pride, Boss Doyle and possibly Imperial Call.

Richard Dunwoody has indicated that he is likely to ride Florida Pearl rather than Dorans Pride, who has twice been placed in the Gold Cup but is beginning to look a declining force.

Florida Pearl, on the other hand, is the emerging star. This giant six-year-old, trained by Willie Mullins, was an impressive winner of the Sun Alliance Chase at the Festival last season, although it could be argued in hindsight that in inflicting a length-and-a-half defeat on Escartefigue, beaten three times this season, he did nothing to set the racing world alight.

However, Florida Pearl is unbeaten over fences, has shown an ability to handle all types of going and clearly arts around Cheltenham — his Sun Alliance win following victory in the Festival Bumper the previous year.

The Cork-based bookmakers Cashmans are making Florida Pearl 6-4 favourite for the Ericsson Chase followed by Sunny Bay at 2-1, Imperial Call at 5-1, Dorans Pride at 6-1 and Boss Doyle at 12-1.

Imperial Call, winner of the John Durkan Chase at Punchestown nine days ago, is not a certain runner and Raymond Hurley, his trainer, still has a preference for the King George provided there is cut in the ground.

A spokesperson for the stable said yesterday: "He's come out of his Punchestown

race really well and is very fresh. He's spending a lot of time outside in a field. We still favour the King George but if Nougat Meade claims Paul Carberry to ride at Leopardstown we will have to look for another jockey. That might become a factor as Carberry has struck up a very good partnership with the horse."

Imperial Call's presence at Kempton would add much-needed class to the King George, which apart from See More Business, is beginning to look a contest for second raters, although supporters of Teeton Mill might be up in arms about such derogatory terminology.

Of course, Teeton Mill was tremendously impressive in winning the Hennessy Gold Cup, but even after being raised 15lb for that win he is rated only 156, which means he is still well below Sunny Bay (171). See More Business (173), Escartefigue (165), Imperial Call (163), Simply Dashing (160) and Cytar Malta (160).

No decision has yet been made about the participation of Cytar Malta running in the King George, but obviously he too would inject massive interest. He has twice won around Sandown's right-hand course and should act at Kempton where the easy three miles would not test his possibly doubtful stamina too much.

"Showcase" races, which have pumped almost half a million pounds in prize money into British racing since their introduction on March 26 this year, are to be revamped for 1999 — one Showcase Handicap each race, which ever practicable and when competitiveness is assured, will be at the principal meeting of the day."

Folkestone Jackpot card with guide to the form

CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
12.30	1.00
1.00	1.30
1.30	2.00
2.00	2.30
2.30	3.00
3.00	3.30

Underlying, daylong, circuit of 1m30. 2200m run-in on grass course, hurdles 250yds run-in. Not particularly suited to the long-staying jumper.

Racing: Chances: Good to Soft; Hurdles: Soft. * Denotes drinkers.

Season-day winners: None.

Blackboard first time: 12.30 Salop, 12.30 Topanga.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.

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Underlying, daylong, circuit of 1m30. 2200m run-in on grass course, hurdles 250yds run-in. Not particularly suited to the long-staying jumper.

Racing: Chances: Good to Soft; Hurdles: Soft. * Denotes drinkers.

Season-day winners: None.

Blackboard first time: 12.30 Salop, 12.30 Topanga.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.

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Bosman feels pain of life on the outside

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID BURNET

tion in 11; he thus misses the critical 1-1 home draw with Dynamo Kiev.

October 7: Charged with misconduct by the FA.

December: Six bookings so far in the season — three in Champions League, three in Premiership.

Total (1995-96): Two red cards; 26 yellow cards. (Since Arsène Wenger took over at Highbury in August 1996, Arsenal players have collected 15 red cards).

The historic judgment that

I can tell it still hurts. I see it when he watches soccer,' said his mother Angèle

Bosman murmured gently last weekend: "Now they can show what it has meant to them and do something for me. They have my bank account number. I'll be able to see what comes in."

McCann's transfer to Rangers rekindles sectarian talk in Glasgow

soever," he said. "I'm a Rangers supporter now and when I pull on the blue jersey, I will give this club all I have."

McCann may make his debut against Hearts at Tynecastle on Saturday but Rangers' problems are in defence. Lorenzo Amor-

St Mirren have ended their manager Tony Fitzpatrick's second spell in charge of the club. His sacking came after Satur-

day's 5-1 defeat by Airdrie.

Broncos perfect record ends with Giants killing

76 yards in seven plays, before his work was capped by a 27-yard touchdown run from Terrell Davis.

Davis' touchdown gave the Broncos a 16-13 lead with 4 minutes left and it seemed as if Denver would eke out a victory but the Giants' defence did not buckle and quarterback Graham, not even the Giants' first choice at the

After an electrifying 23-yard scramble up the middle, Graham launched the ball towards the right corner of the zone, where Amani Toomer, his receiver, beat Tito Paulto the ball and kept his feet in bounds for the winning 37-yard score.

Mike Shanahan, the Broncos coach, tried to put a positive spin on a loss that

shattered his side's 18-game winning streak and their hopes of equalling the Miami

Dolphins' perfect 1972 season. "The last couple of games, we have not been playing like we did earlier in the season," he said. "Hopefully, this game will be a wake-up call for us."

It was a terrific day for New York's sides as the Jets beat the Miami Dolphins 21-16. In downing the Dolphins, the Jets qualify for the play-offs in another triumph for Bill Parcells, who took over as coach only two years ago.

The second play-off position in the AFC East is still up for grabs with the Dolphins, and

the Buffalo Bills, who thrashed the Oakland Raiders 44-21, tied for second place.

club chairman, Josep Luis Nunez, to go as Barcelona were humbled 3-1 at home by newly promoted Villareal. The board would no doubt find it easier to dispense with the Dutch coach's services

to go. I'm very pro-Madrid, I think I've proved that. But if this continues, I'll have to sit down with club president Lorenzo Sanz and find a solution," he said.

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Olympic movement closes ranks, page 13
ICC promises match-fixing inquiry, page 14

Hopes fade for England's batting, page 14
Vieira cleared of assault charge, page 15

SportsGuardian

Leeds move into third spot

Premiership: Leeds United 2 Coventry City 0

Happy homecoming for Batty

David Hopps

FLAIR and elegance have never been as important to David Batty as the end product, and the manner of his homecoming at Elland Road last night could hardly have emphasised that more strongly.

Leeds went third in the Premiership, and Batty even provided the flick which set up David Hopkin's first-half goal, but it was a fidgety, unconvincing victory, given an extra gloss by Lee Bowyer's injury-time goal after a Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink cross from the left was deflected into his path.

"He's been away for a while but tonight he's back where he belongs." For Batty, a Leeds loyalist, there was no denying the pride generated by his return. The child-size T-shirts on sale outside the ground, emblazoned "I was born to play for Leeds United" might have been designed for him.

Allegiances these days are largely decided by potential bank balances (known in code as "securing the future of my family") but Batty's return to Elland Road was different: he had made his home-debut 11 years ago with Leeds 13th in the old Second Division and the club on its knees, four years later, he won a championship medal no one had expected; he left reluctantly on bankers' instructions, and in spells with Blackburn and Newcastle, pointedly refused to leave the area.

Batty predictably honoured his devotion with a sacrifice — George Boateng lay prone on the damp Elland Road turf within five minutes, and was duly booked. It was a reckless, biting, sliding challenge, typical of the man; he did not travel as far when he was commuting. Coventry's Trond Solvetved, booked a minute earlier, clearly had not grasped the significance of the evening.

Both in giving youth his head, and in making Batty his first major signing, Leeds' new manager David O'Leary has



Too close for comfort... Jonathan Woodgate of Leeds finds his way blocked by Coventry's Marc Edworthy at Elland Road

PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN RADFORD

shrewdly restored West Yorkshire pride, which had been offended by George Graham's prolonged decision to join Tottenham Hotspur, a Londoner rushing back to London with indecent conviction.

Last night, though, Leeds

began diffidently and were immensely fortunate not to fall behind after 17 minutes. Boateng had recovered sufficiently from Batty's attentions to sprint down the right. Stephen Froggatt had touched his cross on to the near post,

and Noel Whelan, under pressure, poked it against the other one. Solvetved even collected a cut forehead as Jon Woodgate headed clear. That Hasselbaink was side-tracked by petty disputes with a linesman and Coventry de-

fenders — he now faces suspension after being booked for a peripheral midfield spat with Richard Shaw — did not help Leeds' cause. Then when Magnus Hedman missed his punch at Ian Harte's corner, Hasselbaink blazed over the bar.

Leeds' urgently needed a moment of invention and, five minutes before half-time, it came from an unforeseen quarter — a Batty back flick. Coventry's defence was opened in an instant, leaving Harry Kewell to feed Harte on the left of the area and David Hopkin to pop in a low cross from no more than three yards out for his first goal for 14 months.

Nigel Martyn's alert low save from Noel Whelan ensured that Leeds held their lead at the interval. Coventry, who had hustled to good purpose, were again reeling their inability to finish.

A juddering challenge by Roland Nilsson on Lucas Radebe, barely restored after a knee injury — his future se-

cured with a new contract — ensured that Leeds would find no equanimity and, after trying to run off the injury, the South African retired with an hour gone.

Leeds might have stretched their lead through Robert Molenar but, surprised to find himself unmarked six yards out after Hopkin's deep free-kick, he failed entirely to follow up his back-pedal with a back-header.

As the rain teamed down, Martyn had to save from Whelan and Boateng in quick succession. As Batty, short of match practice and feeling the pace, was withdrawn 18 minutes from time, he could not jog down the tunnel with total confidence that victory would arrive on schedule.

Leeds United (3-1-1-5): Martyn; Woodgate, Molenar, Radebe (Harte); Bowyer, Batty (McPhill, 75), Hopkin, Harte, Kewell; Hasselbaink, 69.

Coventry City (4-4-2): Hedman; Nilsson, Shaw, Williams, Edworthy; Clement (Jackson, 58), Boateng (Hall, 75), McAllister, Froggatt; Solvetved, Whelan.

Referee: G. Pini (Ting).

All in all, it's brickies who reveal the fall



Jim White

YESTERDAY it was announced that the flat-headed bumblebee was extinct in this country. No longer will it buzz from bloom to bloom before ending up, as all bumblebees do, spinning pointlessly in the dust.

It was almost certain that, last night, something else was lost to the nation, too: England's active involvement in Ashes cricket, expiring for another decade, spinning pointlessly in the dust under the furrowed gaze of the game's own Bumble, David Lloyd. Covering cricket in Australia, newspaper commentators are always hostages to fortune, having to second-guess what might occur overnight. The way this series has gone, however, has made the writer's job so much easier. Few would suggest it is unsafe to predict that, unless the rain came, what happened last night was this: England, written in the Adelaide best with Mark Ramprakash again left unbeaten, obliged to stand at one end watching his teammates display all the spinal solidity of a sling with a pinch of salt on its tail.

Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have been proved wrong on this (well, short of seeing Nasser Hamed lose on points to Dale Winton). But most likely the obituaries on English cricket are being polished off yet again, their sheen now so bright you can see your face in them. No doubt many of the death notices will blame the England players, which would be harsh on Ramprakash, Nasser Hussain and the ever-reliable Mike Atherton. Some will concentrate on eccentric selection, as if dropping Alex Tudor and forgetting to bring along Phil Tufnell really constitute mistakes sufficient to cost the series.

In fact, there is no need to seek long explanations. The reason for England's travails is this: the best team won. Indeed, even without Shane Warne, Australia appear to be unstoppable, good at everything, marshalled by a captain whose ability and self-belief are almost as vast as his backside. To watch these Australians in the flesh is to witness a team playing a different

game from us. I have never seen cricketers exude such bristling menace. When Australians do it, merely standing in the slip cordon constitutes threatening behaviour. Anyone who wonders how John Crawley, an accomplished batsman who was the leading Englishman in the averages last summer, comes to resemble a six-foot dripping tap when he arrives at an Australian crease clearly hasn't been there. I sympathise with the player; I felt intimidated just watching from the stands.

England simply cannot compete with this. It is not about sledging. As the pitiful attempts of Dominic Cork to match the Aussies prove, it is not about loud-mouthed sportsmanship. It is about the channelled, aggressive purpose that comes from knowing that your sport matters and if you don't succeed there's a log-jam of talent waiting to take your place. In Britain, the writing in the lengthening shadow of football, cricket has ceased to count. Our once national game has become a minority sport.

In Australia, it is every-where. Walking past building sites, I saw brickies playing cricket in their tea break. Every open space appears to be occupied by pick-up games of impossibly high standard. In a park near the Waca, during a lunchtime knockabout with the Barry Army, we were joined by a bunch of eager eight-year-olds out on a birthday picnic. They proceeded to take us apart; laughter is too weak a term for what they did.

THE point about this Ashes tour is that it is not the fault of Alec Stewart and his lads: as with the West Indies, they are suffering the consequences of a cultural shift away from the game which has left us way behind the enthusiasts of the sub-continent and the southern hemisphere.

The gap between Australia and England is now so huge that we have reached the point where no amount of schools of excellence, or two-tiered county structures or lottery-funded facilities will bridge it.

And in 2½ years' time the cycle of Ashes humiliation starts again. The only way it can be imagined that the pot will be removed from the Aussie's grasp is if, like the Ryder Cup, the rules of entry are changed. Australia against the Rest of the World for the Ashes: the only drawback is, that way there wouldn't be an Englishman on the field. Unless he was the umpire.

Test match reports, page 14



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dinosaur_and_a_football_club_thanks
santa_great_present.com

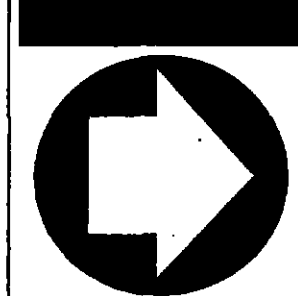


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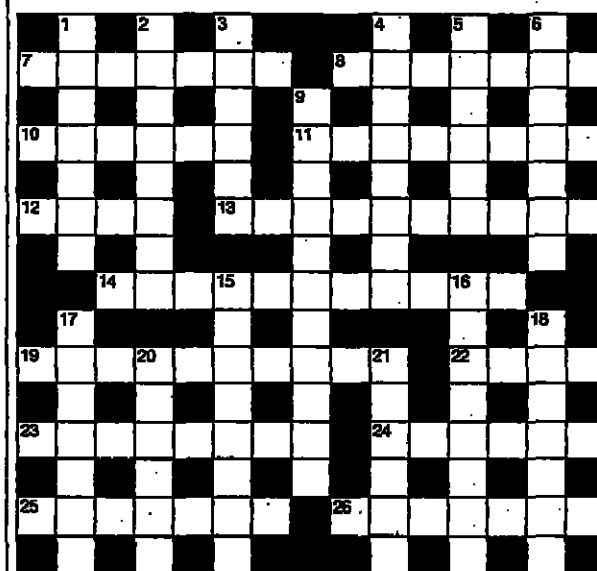


Is she wondering whether to utter a sentence that begins "You may think that this is terribly forward..." or is she checking to see if the trolley has arrived yet? Strangers on a train

G2 front

Guardian Crossword No 21,458

Set by Paul

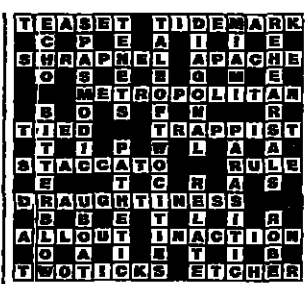


Across

- 7 'The Cat', sound fraudster (7)
8 A lot of water from trunk drowning rat (7)
10 Apart, is together with it reversed (6)
11,22 In the Himalayas Hillary's first, perhaps sherpa had claim? (8,7)
12 See 15
13 Democratic right utterly available? (4,6)
14 Wastefulness, I said, points to ruin (11)
19 Model of these days is model of old Italian style (10)
22 Bloomer with or without the cow (4)
23 No more boxing would be great! (5,3)
24 Adam Henry's guts with decoration (6)

Down

- 25 See 11
26 See 3
1 Pink elephant? O My! Try holding the spirit (7)
2 Bone in pint and one makes a complaint (8)
3,26 Saint wanted a rood in flames put out (4,2,7)
4 Monkey asks for some nuts in shop (8)
5 Hanger-on can't stand the heat (5)
6 Go on alone, we hear? (7)
9 For a win in football... (5,6)
15,12... toss some red coins (1,2,5,4)
16 'The Spectator' is a newspaper (8)
17 Cereal store Cooper keeps bolted (7)

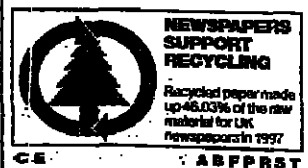


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,457

- 1,8,21 Was very little the matter at first? (3,4,6)
20 Insect injects accountant with compound of acid (6)
21 See 18

Solution tomorrow

If stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 328 328. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by AT&T.



Recycled paper made up 48.03% of the new material for UK newspapers in 1997

John 10.15.50

g2

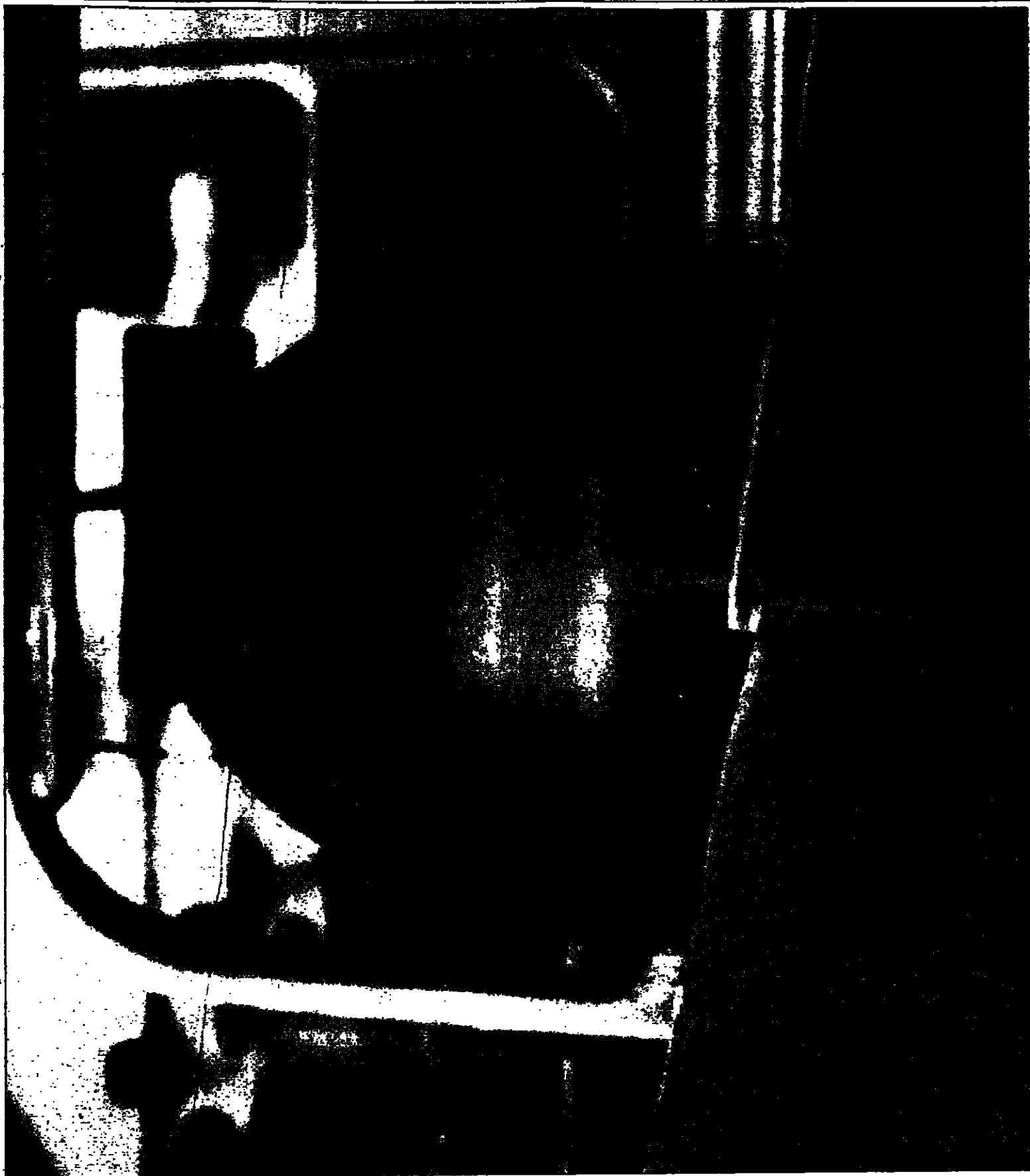
<p>Inside story A very able body new power of the disadvantaged</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Arts Please, no more children's games in the galleries</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Women Eggs for hire: inside the international trade in garnetes</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Plus education The very best kids' books you can buy</p> <p>12</p>
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EUROPE

The Guardian Tuesday December 15 1998 Health 10 • Quick Crossword 15 • Television, Radio & European Weather 16



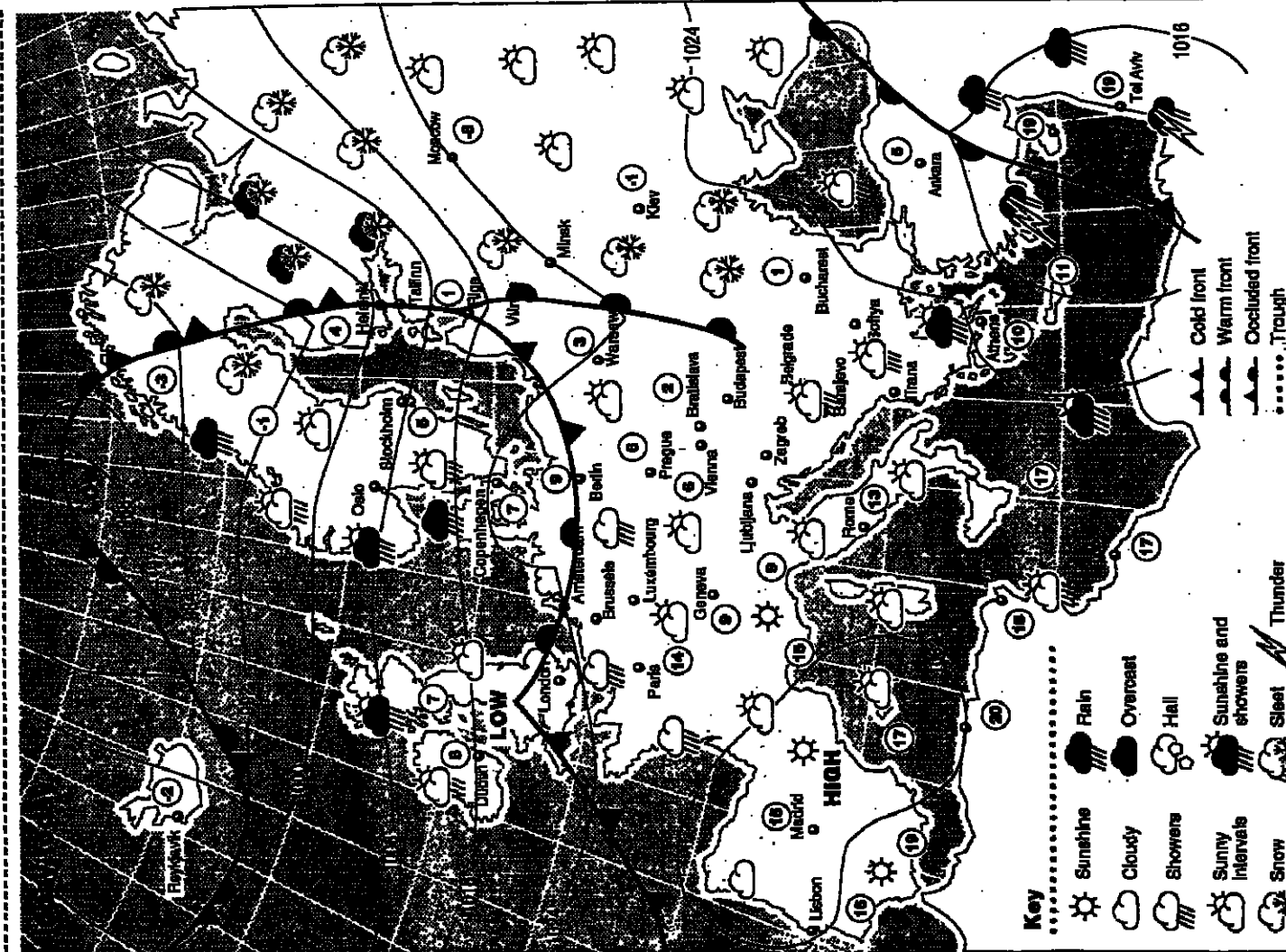
The eyes have it

Their eyes meet across a crowded carriage, was it the spinach sticking to her teeth he noticed or was it the deep, far away look. Anyway they were shagging in no time at all and the rest is history.

Television and radio.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

▶ **PARIS** **RAIN**
 10-15°C

Around the world

▶ **VALDOSTA, GA** **ICE**
 10-15°C

European weather outlook

▶ **PARIS** **RAIN**
 10-15°C

[illegible]

Journal of the Garden and Manchester Evening News Pl.C. 4/2006, Tuesday December 16, 1998. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office 5541205-3017

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by the ex-Herbert, 100, Avenue Road, London N1C 4AG Fax 0171 330 0171 330 0171

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St Mary's University College, Valdergrove Road
Twickenham TW1 4SX

has come on, a sign that she is
lifting
her skirt, taking down her
pants
and peeing all over my face.

has come on, a sign that she is lifting her skirt, taking down her pants and peeing all over my face.

has come on, a sign that she is piling her skirt, taking down her pants and peeing all over my face.

Are you a Peace Minister?
<http://peacenotes.guardian.co.uk>

A very able body

Education

What are you looking at?

To round off a bumper year for children's books, Guardian critics reveal what titles had them enthralled in 1998

Phillip Pullman

Silent Snow, Secret Snow, by Adam Gifford (Puffin, £4.99, age 11+)

A family game of hide-and-seek in the garden of a house in the north of England. When they are out of it, a snowman, all kinds of

secret come out. It's good to find as much attention given to the adults as to the young: they have problems too, and aren't much better at dealing with them.

White Wolf, by Henrietta Branford (Walker, £3.99, age 10+)

Bratford, whose *Fire, Bad and Bone* was a runner-up for this year's Carnegie Medal, has produced another masterful book narrated by an animal: a white wolf whose life in the US Pacific north-west touches that of humans. Branford's convincing

story is convincing. Branford's convincing story is convincing. Branford's convincing story is convincing.

Abominable, by Robert Swindells (Doubleday, £3.99, age 11+)

The theme of fundamental religion and how it can distort a family is timely. Abominable tells the story of Martha, whose family belongs to

the Rhythmic, a ridiculous sect. She is forbidden everything a normal 12-year-old desires, even

friends. There's a secret in the family, too. Swindells, as ever, strikes a powerful blow for the right side.

Smiling For Strangers, by Anne Campbell (Dolphin, £4.99, age 12+)

Anne Campbell continues to remind us of other countries outside Britain, with real, close and urgent concerns. This is the story of Yveta, fleeing from Yugoslavia and finding not much of a welcome in England. Vivid and truthful, made for Northern Lights (Scholastic).

Lindsey Fraser

Cowboy Baby, by Sue Heap (Walker Books, £3.99, age 3+)

A lovely bedtime story which was an instant success with the three-year-old to whom it was introduced. He joins in ("Yes, street") and is fascinated by Cowboy Baby's hat. The child seeking his lost toys among the cast of the Wild West is a delight.

Me And My Elephant, by various (Mammoth, £3.99, age 3+)

This had a profound effect on me, an anthology of short stories written on behalf of young people who can't write. The project was the result of a conference about the portrayal of young people with disabilities, attended by Elizabeth Land. She gathered writers who each found a young person with a story to tell. Wonderful.

The Boggart And The Monster, by Susan Cooper (FodleyHead, £10.99, age 10+)

Published with remarkably little fanfare, this book revisits the shapeshifting creature who caused havoc in the prequel, *The Boggart*. Now back in Scotland, he is disturbed to discover that the Loch Ness Monster, a fellow shapeshifter, has become a shadow of his former self, unable to fit his bulk from the depths of the loch, let alone change his form to save himself. Great fun, and a testament to the excellence of a writer who has done so much for children's literature and for young readers.

Lindsey Fraser is executive director of the Scottish Books Trust.

Julia Eccleshare

The Runner, by Keith Gray (Mammoth £3.99, age 8+)

A skilful and credible modern fantasy. The Runner keeps its surprise well hidden until the end. Travelling alone to meet his brother, Jason makes friends with Jam, one of the "runners" spending their lives on the lonely trains. Awe and impressed, Jason falls to notice the clues that give the lie to Jam's story. A reassuring ending settles any fears that this spirited adventure might

Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets, by JK Rowling (Bloomsbury £10.99, age 8+)

It also gives David Macaulay a chance to update his ever-developing technologies to his text. In the additional chapter "The Digital Domain" he demonstrates the principles and working of, among other things, the microchip, the Internet and e-mail. Whether you completely understand the underlying story of the fight against evil offers a deeper level story, too.

The Ring Of Words, edited by Roger McGough (Faber, £14.99, age 8+)

Anthologies as good as this are few and far between. Roger McGough

has chosen poems which reflect feelings, some reassuring, some surprising, all important. Rooted in the traditions of Robert Louis Stevenson (from whose poem Words the title comes) it is otherwise a largely twentieth century collection reflecting a wide range of contemporary styles.

David Macaulay (Dorling Kindersley £19.99, age 8 plus)

A new edition of this 10-year-old classic shows how innovative it was when first published and how original and brilliant it remains.

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we're saying we'll get a million to work over here. Come on. She believes the movement is "reentering on the edge of rebellion again". In other words, there may yet be more blood on their hands.

Activists like Kevin Dunne are not going to ease up on the pressure. Last month he was passing his local Labour Party headquarters. He noticed that the car park was repaved and there was a covered driveway with grey tiles and new black and white paving stones. When I was a party member a few years ago, I used to struggle to get to meetings in that building. There was no ramp but they said they'd set up a fund to get one put in. Six years later there's still no ramp.

So Kevin and a few friends paid a visit and did a dance with some blue paint and their wheelchairs until the police stepped in. "They have now said that the ramp will be part of stage two of rebuilding. Six months we'll give them. The next will be time to pay another visit."

Fights over the fence

Bernard Ingham's row with the man next door has got him arrested. What, says **Richard Boston**, ever happened to 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'?

Lady Thatcher's famous dictum about the neighbour's wife is having it said to be exactly right. Indeed, with the neighbour's wife, let's say, a really splendid one, as which is an absolutely top-class world leader of an ox, an ox compared with which your own ox looks frankly silly, then in a case like that it can sometimes be extremely difficult not to do a little bit of coveting.

I have never seen the television programme called *The Bible* as I don't know whether the Bible has relevant comments on it. What I can tell you is that Deuteronomy 27 is spot on as far as East Enders is concerned. Verse 24 says: "Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly." It's obvious that this refers to Grant Mitchell. In the past few months Grant has smitten both his mother and his wife, and a while back he put his brother in hospital. Last week while talking to a woman who he had toppled down the stairs and into the hospital, right there in the intensive care ward he thumped her a week after he had thumped her in the pub. Sometimes Grant thumps people secretly, sometimes quite openly. Sometimes he thumps a neighbour, sometimes a family. In any case, make no mistake it's Grant that Deuteronomy is talking about. In previous verses say "Cursed be he that lech with his mother-in-law," which is precisely what Grant and Tiffany's mother have been doing. Dogs are often the bone of contention, so to speak, between neighbours. That's what John McVie, for example, did with his neighbour over McVie's reformed armed robber and, finally enough, the Bernard Ingham, a sometime Guardian contributor. In June 1998 he was found not guilty of headbutting his neighbour, Scott Calley, an advertising salesman. McVie had a terrible accident with a dog called Clem. The dog was a Labrador crossed with a Rhodesian ridgeback. First the dogs had a go at one another and then the humans. McVie's dog directed his own attack on Clem. In the end the dog was killed. Clem was a broken Calley's dog. McVie said he acted in self-defence. What must have happened is that Bernard Ingham's dog was in the

Calley struck McVie's head with his nose. Anyway, McVie got off and the judge congratulated him on the great skill and ability with which he had conducted his defence. Presumably he meant this in the legal sense.

Then this July the football player Yvonne Jones was ordered not to hear the clink of prison doors and of community service and be fined a grand or so for billing, kicking, shopping and a smug on a neighbouring riding instructor. "I'm just very relieved," he said as he left court with his wife Thanya. "This has been terrible for both of us." It must have been pretty terrible for the riding instructor too. Whether or not Mr Jones has written for the *Guardian* I don't know.

What brings us to the Inghams then? Why back in 1999 it came to public attention that relations between Ingham and his neighbour Barry Cripps were not all sweet and light. Mr Cripps, who is in the loft conversion business, added an upper storey to his bungalow without planning permission. Ingham kicked up a fuss. He was quoted as saying that his last two summers working for Mrs Thatcher had been ruined by the building work. If this atmosphere was more raucous than in Mrs Thatcher's 10 Downing Street, it must have indeed been hellish, but Mr Cripps counter-claimed that his family's tranquillity had been shattered every night by Ingham's snoring and snoring officers with their radios and security lights. The upshot was that the council decided that Mr Cripps's work did not need planning permission. Cripps, set and match to Cripps, one might have thought, but the events of last Sunday night suggest that all is still not tickety-boo on the Ingham-Cripps front. The alleged dispute on Sunday night has to do with the alleged Ingham driveway being blocked by the Cripps alleged car.

At the best of times Bernard Ingham is an impressive sight. With an apparent provocation he saw well up to an alarming size, giving every indication of an imminent explosion, puffing and hissing and making his own noises in his own language. In seeing him in full steam and hisses, a huge Mr Cripps had a little machine in record it for posterity. The effect must have been just like that recorded in the verse that immediately follows Moses's reading out of the Ten Commandments. When he had concluded with the rules on how to treat your neighbour, all the people (says Exodus 20:18) "saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off."



Bernard Ingham... discord in Pulley

http://www.guardian.co.uk

Health

Worts and all

Are fans of herbal medicine deluding themselves?
Jane Feinmann reports on a booming industry

effective. Six of the 20 best-selling

pharmaceutical drugs in 1996 were

based on compounds derived from

plants — among them the cancer

treatment taxol, from yew tree bark;

the Chinese drug ephedra, from

the Chinese tree ephedra vulgaris;

and codeine, from poppy seed.

And most people have at least

one tried and tested favourite

herbal preparation in their medi-

cine cabinet. But as David Phillips,

senior professor of pharmacy,

points out: "What is generally lack-

ling for many of the herbs in current

use is proof of efficacy."

Even more disturbingly, there are

increasing concerns that some

herbal remedies may not even be

safe. A report in the New England

Journal of Medicine carried six sep-

arate reports of people who devel-

oped severe illness from treating

themselves with poorly tested herbal

remedies — including lead poison-

ing, impotence and abnormal heart

rhythms. Another study found that a

third of 260 traditional Chinese

medicines were contaminated with

heavy metals such as lead or arsenic;

and a herbal remedy made from

one suffered depres-

sion and insomnia

for months after the

end of a significant

relationship, but she

dismissed sugges-

tions from her doctor and her

friends that she might benefit from

an antidepressant. Then she read

about St John's Wort, a herbal reme-

dy that "works as well as Prozac"

and is available from chemists and

health food shops — and put herself

on it straight away.

"I felt much safer taking some-

thing that was natural," she says.

"And because I could go into a shop

and buy a packet of pills, I felt I was

staying in control, coping with my

own grief rather than handing over

to someone else." She's not alone. The

herbal remedy market in Britain is

growing by about 10 per cent a year

with new converts representing a

cross section of the population.

"The're not just New Agers," says

Devon GP Mike Dixon, who found

that many of his patients, like Dora,

are far happier taking St John's Wort

for depression than a prescription

drug. "Some of them may well have

philosophical or ecological beliefs.

But many are ordinary people with

cars, jobs and kids who've heard



plantain and promoted for internal

demulcent was contaminated with

naturally occurring digitalis.

"Anyone buying a herbal remedy

should be aware that there may not

be many safeguards in place to root

out toxic herbs," says Dr Amala

Raman, lecturer in pharmacognosy

at King's College, London. "Nor are

the ingredients necessarily the same

from one purchase to the next. There

is no comparison between a pre-

scription drug such as taxol — a shi-

ple — and a herbal remedy avail-

able over the counter which can

contain any number of variable

constituents."

Even when products are stan-

dardised, there can still be problems.

Kira, a standardised extract of St

John's Wort, is available on prescrip-

tion in Germany for mild to moder-

ate depression. It's seen by some psy-

chiatrists as a useful treatment for

people with Seasonal Affective Dis-

order and PMS — as well as for the

many thousands who, like Dora,

don't want to take antidepressants.

However, because the little yel-

low flower has no licence in the UK

here not as medicine with an active

ingredient, but as a "sunshine herb",

Manufacturers must rely on word of

mouth and the media to explain

about "mood changes".

There is also no mention of side

effects on the packet — even though

light sensitivity is an acknowledged

risk and, says Dr Peter Houghton,

reader at the Centre for Bioactivity

Screening of Natural Products at

King's College, London, the plant

has been shown to stimulate the

uterus in animals. "There's not nec-

"For Christ's sake, go and see Sarah

before you ruin Christmas with this

nonsense." I am loathe to do so, hav-

ing called her twice from Australia

on the matter. The first time, Dr

Jarvis repeated her statement that it

was not a tumour since "a few days

smooth". The second chat, a few days

later, was briefer. "Do you realise,"

she said, "that it's five o'clock in the

morning?" "No, I don't think so," I

replied. "No, I don't think so," I

replied. "No, I don't think so," I

replied. "No, I don't think so," I

November that it would be gone in

365 hours.

Friday

Tension breaks out over the break-

fast table when my wife catches me

feeling the roof of my mouth with

an index finger. "You're not still fret-

ting about that, are you?" she asks,

with typical blindnes. "No, no, of

course not," I reply. "Why would I

give a second's thought to a poten-

tially terminal illness?" She rises

briskly and heads for the front door.

...Hello? Doctor, hello?"

Saturday

When she catches me in front of the

bedroom mirror, holding my head

at 180 degrees and trying to shove a

tongue on the growth, Rebecca crups.

I am alone in the house in the late

afternoon. Rebecca having gone to

Dorset for the day and doing hear-

ily (the jet lag is back) when the

Diary of a hypochondriac

Matthew Norman

Hologram says hello

Thursday

Four days after returning from my

trip to Australia, the jet lag intensi-

fies almost by the hour. My body

clock is so confused now that at no

working moment do I have any idea

of the time of day, indeed, I hardly

know who I am; just that wherever I

may be, I wish to God I was some-

Visual arts



Nursery school...
Laura Ford's
Giraffe and
Moose. Bottom
left, Blunk, by
Simon Periton
Museum of
Modern Art, New
York

Grown artists playing with stuffed animals and paper doilies? **Adrian Searle** has had enough

Come on, act your age

The dog is sitting on the floor in a very big room. I call him Mopey. He's brown, and has been seen out of a blanket and stuffed. There's something a bit blunted and turgid about him, like one of those brain-damaged pub mites that just lies there and sniffs, soaking up fog ash and spalled Guinness. The only other inhabitant of the room is a tall urban bird, who stands in the corner, back to the wall. Perhaps he's dis-

praced himself. Perhaps they've both been up to something. The room has an unsettling atmosphere, so if the characters from Sesame Street have tied their hands at a Pinxter play or Beckett, then thought better of it and given up. Dismal animal feel now?

In the next room, there are some more animals who aren't having any fun either. There's Giraffe, who's got back trouble; Moose, with his droopy, mournful head and base-ball-mitt ears; there's a dummy turquise creature with a snooty thread dangling from his nose; and such a winsome air of ingratiation that you want to give him a good kick. Don't ask about the canal, whose waters could do with a cross-your-heart ha.

Laura Ford's menagerie gazes slightly at the weird wallpaper on the walls, which consists of columns and rows and blocks of postcard-sized photographs — beach-hut in South-

wold, a decaying house in Havana — the images repeated, stacked, reversed and inverted. These are part of Jacques Poncelet's contribution to a work with Ford called *A Stranger Here Myself*. The infant's love of pattern, of soft, furry, cuddly animals, of picture books and stories, has been revisited by a pair of knowing adults. In another room, the music has stopped and all the Chind Girls have

been up to something. The room has an unsettling atmosphere, so if the characters from Sesame Street have tied their hands at a Pinxter play or Beckett, then thought better of it and given up. Dismal animal feel now?

In the next room, there are some more animals who aren't having any fun either. There's Giraffe, who's got back trouble; Moose, with his droopy, mournful head and base-

the mania. He's got five legs and dolly with an archaic A-sign, leg fil-

ices of barbed-wire, owl, paper cut-out terrorists and surgeons, acid-house camouflage, encephalic and group-explaining Impressionism and group-champ with Cubism. We wrestled Du-

These were things we could get our tech into. We educated, we mediated, we explained and we bit back when we could. The modern critical tradition, which began with Ruskin and Pater, with their higher thought about civil-

isation and nature, has led us to the appreciation of what? Stuffed animals and paper doilies and buttoned-down

The 19th-century critics emphasised their adulthood with their affection for the adult world. The complacency of doilies was beneath them. Children, when they had any, were clothed with Nanny in an upstairs room, then sent away to school to be thrashed incessantly. Your modern critic has to hang out at Toys 'R Us with all the other daisies, and spend hours in kiddie-friendly instal-

lations. And now art wants to entertain us as though we were tiny tots too. I'm off to go and strangle my inner child. And you, dear, don't blow your nose on the doily.

Laura Ford and Jacques Poncelet and Simon Periton at Camden Arts Centre, London NW1 6PH 1-45 1453 at January 31.

